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The University of Alberta

Interpretive and Adaptive Strategies in College Leadership

by

Donald E. Hall

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Educational Administration

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 1989

Administrative Science Quarterly

John H. Freeman, *Editor* Linda J. Pike, *Managing Editor*

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Dedicated to

Margaret F. Hall, Ernest H. Hall, and A. Jerri Hall

who made it possible

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate, describe, and explain the process whereby an Alberta college gained equilibrium with its environment. More specifically, the study explored how the leadership in the college used interpretive and adaptive strategies to manage the organization.

Turbulence, chaos, and uncertainty are factors in the environment which have implications for college leaders. The adjustment of an organization to the changes in the environment is referred to as organizational adaptation, the purpose of which is to align and balance the organization with its environment (Cameron, 1984). Successful adaptation requires leaders to break with past traditional conservative practices.

A public college provided the site for this historical case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) which focused upon the development of an organization over time. The study was interpretive (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) within the naturalistic paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The tenets of Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, Mangham's (1988) dramaturgical approach, and Smircich and Morgan's (1982) view of leadership as "the management of meaning" and organizations as "networks of managed meanings" (p. 270) provided the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

Through a modified, progressive nomination technique (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), the design emerged as the study progressed. The study was shaped by the research question and subsidiary questions, which were incorporated into the semi-structured interview guide.

This study concluded that interpretive strategies guided adaptive

strategies. The environment and the culture of the organization were important factors in managing the college. Further, the research found that the process of clarifying and articulating the mandate facilitated organizational change. A climate of trust and support were necessary preconditions in changing the organization through the people of the organization. Consultation and involvement of members of the organization were found to be meaningful to them. The use of multiple strategies was found to be most effective in college leadership. In particular, the effective use of symbols by the leadership was an important component of interpretive strategy.

A reexamination of the literature found the study's findings to be congruent with the research of Chaffee (1984, 1985); Chaffee and Tierney (1988); Roueche, Baker, amd Rose (1988, 1989); and Smircich and Stubbart (1985). The study provided evidence to support the finding that the leadership which was demonstrated was what is commonly referred to in the literature as transformational leadership.

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Chapter 1

Overview and Purpose of the Study

Introduction

The future for higher education, according to Zammuto (1986), who employs the term coined by Boulding (1982, pp. 11-17), is "irreducibly uncertain" (p. 45). Cameron (1983) states, "Most predictions about the future of colleges and universities include conditions of decline" (p. 359). Roeber (1973) indicates that in Western industrialized countries, the environment is "becoming more of a factor inside organizations and requires more explicit attention" and the "key characteristic is loss of slack" (p. 154).

Scholars speculate that postindustrial environments will be different from past or present environments. Huber (1982) predicts that

> postindustrial society will be characterized by more and increasing knowledge, more and increasing complexity, and more and increasing turbulence. These, in combination, will pose an organizational environment qualitatively more demanding than those in our experience. (p. 4)

Drucker (1980) points out that the one thing certain about the future is the turbulent times ahead (p. 4).

Cameron (1984) recognizes the increasing influence of environments on organizations and forecasts that "adaptive strategies should constitute a critical concern of future managers" (p. 132). Managers will be faced with increasingly more environmental turbulence, forcing them to make more decisions in shorter periods of time. Managers will be limited by "bounded rationality" in that their cognitive capacities will be overwhelmed with the necessity to consider all the information (p. 134). The postindustrial environment requires managers to think differently. Peters (1987) urges managers "to take the chaos as given and learn to thrive on it" (p. xvi). Peters and Cameron insist that in order to be effective in present and future environments, aside from adaptation strategies of managers, the organizations themselves must be designed so as to enhance their ability to adapt.

Authors have made reference to the Chinese word for 'crisis' (*wei ji*), which includes two characters representing danger and opportunity (Andrews, 1984; Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984; and Whetton, 1981). Behn (1984) stresses the importance of "jujitsu management" and urges public administrators to "take advantage of unstoppable social forces (be they demographic, cultural, political, or economic) to create momentum for managerial reforms that would otherwise be impossible to adopt" (p. 117). The crises of retrenchment can be used as a stimulus for investigating new opportunities (Whetton, 1981).

Nevertheless, the signs of potential adversity are clear and managers must be conscious of the potential for maladaptive administrative behavior in their reaction to threats from the environment (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981). Administrative responses to turbulent environments have accounted for the demise of some institutions and the flourishing of others.

Turbulence in the environment creates an imbalance or mismatch between the organization and the environment. According to Cameron (1984), the adjustment of an organization to the changes in the environment is referred to as "organizational adaptation," the purpose of which is "to restore equilibrium to an unbalanced condition. Adaptation generally refers to a process, not an event, whereby changes are instituted in organizations" (p. 125). Turbulence, decline, and uncertainty are factors in the environment which have implications for the administration of colleges. Daft (1986) is unequivocal: "The primary responsibility of the top leader is to determine the organization's goals and strategy, and therein adapt the organization to a changing environment" (p. 474). Ford and Baucus (1987) reject the notion that environments can be viewed objectively and portray decision makers as "adapting to their interpretations of actions in an uncertain and ambiguous environment that is not objectively knowable" (p. 369). This study attempts to examine the processes experienced within a college in response to a changing environment. The primary data sources of this research report were the perceptions and interpretations of college personnel.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate, describe, and explain the adaptive process(es) whereby an Alberta college adapted to its environment. The question which directed the study was: What strategies does the leadership in a college use to manage the organization? The following subsidiary questions also guided the research:

1. Who are the college leaders and what constitutes the college's leadership?
2. Which incidents are most critical in changing the college?
3. What strategies are used by college leaders?
    (a) What adaptive strategies are used?
    (b) What interpretive strategies are used?
4. What are the important factors in "managing" the college?

5. How do the various elements interact to produce organizational change?

Significance of the Study

The next decade, according to the literature in higher education, promises to be challenging, as "it will be a period of great uncertainty --uncertainty about finances, enrollments, and the maintenance of quality" (Peck, 1984, p. 269). Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley (1978) state, "There is no longer any question as to whether academic organizations are affected by external forces. The only question is whether colleges and universities will be able to adapt to these strong and often conflicting environmental pressures." They continue, "In all cases, their ability to adapt and preserve their distinctiveness is dependent upon effective management of environmental pressures" (p. 225).

The role of administrators in managing decline has received little attention in the business literature (Hardy, 1987). Levine (1979) observes that effective management of decline requires managers to think differently. Managers of Canadian corporations have skills which were useful in periods of growth but maladaptive in periods of contraction (Luce, 1983). There is a dangerous tendency for organizations and top managers to "encase their learning" (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984, p. 53). Successful past strategies become encapsulated dominant problem-solving approaches for the present and there is resistance to unlearn yesterday's ideas. Cameron (1984) refers to the "bounded rationality" which constrains managers in thinking about alternate strategies in the face of crisis (p. 134). Research shows that individuals and organizations respond to threat conditions through constrictions in information processing, the movement of control to higher levels, and the conservation of resources (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981). This behavior is inappropriate when flexibility and diversity have a survival value.

As indicated below, this study has both practical and theoretical significance. Consequently, the results of the study should be of interest to those who are in senior administrative roles in colleges and those who study, teach, and conduct research.

In reference to the practical considerations, much of the adaptation and decline literature is from the United States and very little research has been conducted in public colleges in Canada. This research may be significant in that it will be conducted in the Canadian and, more specifically, in the Albertan context. The findings may provide some useful insights which would serve as a guide to practicing college administrators.

This research has the potential of making a contribution to organizational theory, as it investigates adaptation from the process rather than the outcome perspective. As a result, Singh, House, and Tucker (1986) state, "More fine-grained methods like ethnography or case studies may be more useful to study such processes of adaptative organizational change" (p. 551). Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985) argue for organizational adaptation research which emphasizes "integration rather than differentiation of views" and call for research which "reduces conceptual or theoretical barriers" (p. 348). They consider the interactive view of voluntarism (choice) and determinism in the adaptation process to be an important research issue. Beyond choice and determinism, Astley and Van de Ven (1983) emphasize that "structural forms and personnel action are central issues of interest to organization and management theory" (p. 266). Further, Weick (1983) suggests that the "implication for administrative practice of interpretive approaches" is "especially suited" for research (p. 28). He succinctly summarizes the need for study in the proposed research area:

> Few scholars believe that organizations confront only objective environments, but even fewer believe that organizations confront just environments of their own construction. Despite widespread dissatisfaction with both extreme views, little has emerged to replace them. Filling that gap seems an attractive candidate for any research agenda. (p. 17)

Scholars have written about the paucity of research related to the interpretation of information from the environment and the management of meaning: "The information interpretation literature is woeful," state Huber and Daft (1987), and they continue, "Almost any type of research would help" (p. 157). This study includes an investigation into information interpretation and the construction of shared meaning, research areas which Huber and Daft believe are important, as they have the potential to advance knowledge in reference to organizational culture and organizational learning.

This study has a potential contribution to make to research on and to research methodology in the field of higher education. Chaffee (1985a) urges higher education researchers to more "fully exploit the opportunities offered by the case study method." Further, she recommends that, if appropriate, "a less-studied" type of institution other than private liberal arts colleges be the focus of study (p. 164). The Alberta public college site may contribute to the methodological literature.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations. The scope of the study was delimited in accordance with the following factors:

1. The study was confined to the analysis of one Alberta college.
2. The period of time over which the college has been studied was focused primarily from 1982-1989. The period of time corresponds to the term of the college's current president and the period which was uppermost in the memory of informants. However, to place the study in perspective, a brief overview of the college's history and a description of the college's environment at the time of the president's appointment were also included.
3. The study was delimited to the analysis of documents to which the researcher could obtain access and to the collection of data from those individuals and groups deemed significant to the adaptation process.
4. Participants in this study were delimited to college personnel.
5. The study was delimited to the analysis of how a college adapted to its environment.

Assumptions. The assumptions concerning this study were:

1. The central figures and other pertinent data sources were available as information sources for the proposed study.
2. The case study method was appropriate for investigating the adaptation process.

Limitations. The limitations of this study were:

1. The study of one college limits the ability to generalize the findings of this research.

2. A limitation of the study relates to the use of individuals as sources of information, in that the interview data collected were limited to the extent that central figures can accurately recall events within the delimited timespan.
3. The study was limited by the researcher's ability to interview and fully understand the meanings of others.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study in the contexts of the following definitions:

organizational adaptation: This concept has been defined as "the modifications and alterations in the organization or its components in order to adjust to changes in the external environment" (Cameron, 1984, p. 123). Adaptation is predicated on changes motivated by the environment and is therefore different from planned change or organizational development (O.D.).

environment: An organization's environment is the external context as a whole and therefore includes demographic, economic, political, social, organizational and technological elements (Jonsen, 1984).

adaptive strategy: An adaptive strategy is employed when "the organization and its parts change, proactively or reactively, in order to be aligned" with elements in the environment (Chaffee, 1985b, p. 94).

interpretive strategy: An interpretive strategy is employed when "organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favor the organization" (Chaffee, 1985b, p. 94).

leadership: Leadership is defined as "the ability to influence, shape, and embed values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors consistent with increased commitment" to the college's unique mission (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989, p. 34).

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the report and includes an overview and purpose of the study. In Chapter 2 the literature relevant to adaptation and interpretation is reviewed and is preceded by a brief literature review of administrative practice in the face of uncertain environments. The research methodology for this study is the subject of Chapter 3, which contains a discussion of the interpretive perspective, case study methodology, and qualitative and naturalistic inquiry and concludes with a detailed description of the processes used to collect and analyze the data and the procedures used to ensure trustworthiness.

Chapters 4-9 comprise The Story of Olds College, an interpretation which begins with a brief history of the college from 1913-1982. The history is followed by a discussion of the environment of Olds College in 1982 and a description of the college's new leadership. The subsequent development of a mandate and other interpretive and adaptive strategies are discussed. The implications of the effect of the environment upon instructional delivery is explored through the next part of The Olds College Story, followed by a presentation of some consequences of change. The Story of Olds College concludes with an exploration of the relationship between the Town of Olds and the college and their shared culture.

The themes which emerged from the study are the focus of Chapter 10, which also includes some reflections on the adaptive process and a discussion of the relative merit of the adaptive and interpretive strategies. The concluding chapter, Chapter 11, contains a summary of the findings, a discussion of the conclusions, and the implications for theory, research, and practice.

Chapter 2

Adaptation and Interpretation: Theoretical Underpinnings

Introduction

> For a given system, the environment is the set of all objects a change in whose attributes affects the system and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behaviour of the system. . . . Ultimately it depends on the intentions of the one who is studying the particular universe as to which of the possible configurations of objects is to be taken as the system. (Hall & Fagan, 1956, p. 20)

The literature pertaining to organizational adaptation has been reviewed and clustered under two headings: "Research into Practice" and "Theoretical Perspectives." Contemporary college environments are generally characterized by uncertainty and turbulence, usually as a result of decline or fluctuations in resources. The response of management has been varied and has called to question traditional practices. Doing the right things rather than doing things right is the emerging credo. Organizational leaders are examining the raison d'etre of their operations and are attempting to align their activities with the changing environments. The theoretical constructs presented are intended to provide a framework which will guide the interpretation of the Story of Olds College and the leadership strategies which were used to transform the college.

The radical change in organizational environments and the resulting implications for the organization stimulated recent activity and interest in the area of adaptation research and theory building. A broad spectrum of theoretical orientations will be reviewed, the fundamental debate between adaptation and selection perspectives will be discussed, the emergence of the interpretive approach will be presented, and three models of strategy will be reviewed. The literature review will conclude with a summary of the salient points presented.

Research into Practice

The Efficient Response

Efficiency is often the sole response to a threatening environment. Whetton (1981) has identified six efficiency reinforcing dynamics:

1. The conservative effects of stress as a natural response of administrators.
2. The trained incapacity of administrators who rely upon past practices.
3. The innovation-resistant organizational structure of colleges and university based upon loosely coupled units imbued with collegial tradition.
4. Problem solving based on efficiency data which is relatively easy to measure as compared to measuring effectiveness.
5. The phenomenon of "free-exiters" (Levine, 1979), where the most innovative members leave first, the consequence of which renders the retrenching organization in a state of "innovation anemia" (Whetton, 1981, p. 88).
6. Crisis leads to the espousal of traditional values and the scapegoating of past innovations for the organization's demise (pp. 83-89).

Conservative reactions to decline-induced uncertainty, such as encased learning and groupthink, appear rational, yet are maladaptive tendencies on the part of administrators who automatically select the most efficient approach. Groupthink "refers to a determination of mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgement that results from in-group pressures" (French, Kast, & Rosenzweig, 1985, p. 245). Nystrom and Starbuck (1984) report on a study of twenty corporations in crises where "the chief executives generally surrounded themselves with yes-sayers who voiced no criticisms" and who filtered out warnings and dissent from the rest of the organization (p. 60). "Thus, any rigidities generated by group process under threat may also be manifested in organizational actions," conclude Staw, Sandelands, and Dutton (1981, p. 518).

However, senior managers can avoid groupthink and unlearn dysfunctional past practices by listening to dissents, transforming crises into learning opportunities and by assuming an experimental frame of reference, advocate Nystrom and Starbuck (1984). They state, "Organizations succumb to crises largely because their top managers, bolstered by recollections of past successes live in worlds circumscribed by their cognitive structures. Top managers misperceive events and rationalize their organizations' failures" (p. 59).

In a study of forty higher-education institutions in the United States, Cameron (1983) describes the tendency for administrators to respond to threatening conditions with efficient and conservative approaches. He found that institutions which had experienced decline had "significantly more standardized structures, they relied on previous, conservative practices, the external environment was perceived as being lean on resources, and organizational effectiveness was low in dimensions representing the core academic domain and the morale domain" (p. 366). More significantly, the top administrators of the declining institutions focused their attentions upon budgeting, fiscal concerns, and fundraising, and ignored the environment. The administrators in the flourishing institutions did the opposite, in that they placed a high emphasis on public relations and service and a low emphasis on finances and budgeting.

Petrie and Alpert (1983) refer to Argyris and Schon's concept of "single-loop" learning, a linear approach which involves "a simple adjustment of organizational behavior within the range allowed by existing norms" (p. 58). The initial response of educational administrators facing environmental decline is the search for greater efficiency or "single-loop" learning. Many members of an organization in crisis cannot envisage fundamental changes of institutional norms, structures or missions which are characteristic of "double-loop" learning (p. 102). In fact, "behavior considered rational in one mode of learning may be viewed as totally irrational in the other" (p. 99). Administrators of threatened organizations, by virtue of the factors mentioned above, may be blind to the maladaptive nature of the efficiency approach. They may

> become preoccupied with improving internal efficiency in response to declining enrollments, they will stifle dialogue about more fundamental ecological issues such as the role of education in the social and economic environments of the future and the maladaptive consequences of revered academic conventions like faculty tenure, promotion criteria, and the committee system of governance. (Whetton, 1981, p. 92)

The Effective Response

In a recent study of successful colleges, Peck (1984) found that leadership was a critical factor and that organizational objectives were designed "to realize institutional purposes in effective rather than efficient ways" (p. 276). He identified seven features of successful college leadership:

1. The colleges were committed to a shared mission and purpose.
2. The colleges were opportunity conscious and conceptualized their environment in terms of potentials rather than threats.
3. The colleges were highly innovative and creative from both the leadership and the institutional perspective.
4. The colleges made decisions about change and the future based upon intuition.
5. The colleges administered through people as opposed to structure.
6. The colleges sought to be effective, not merely efficient.
7. The colleges were very well run at the operational level.

Behn (1983) shares the challenge of environmental decline which he believes presents administrators with five managerial opportunities:

1. The Opportunity to Rethink Organizational Strategy
2. The Opportunity to Rethink the Meaning and Measures of Performance
3. The Opportunity to Increase Managerial Flexibility
4. The Opportunity to Rethink the Meaning of Equity
5. The Opportunity to Develop New Management Styles

A recurring theme in the literature and in reports from the experiences of administrators who have successfully managed decline is that "in an era of scarcity we will need new solutions to problems of how to manage public organizations and maintain the viability of democratic processes" (Levine, 1979, p. 180).

Decline-induced uncertainty places organizations into crises which call for effective and unique solutions. Levine (1979) has identified nine practical problems associated with "cutback management" which illustrate the need for administrators to think differently (p. 180).

1. "The Paradox of Irreducible Wholes," simply stated, is that organizational contraction cannot be accomplished by the piece-by-piece reversal of the growth process. Recent additions have been absorbed and are inextricably woven into the fabric of the organization.
2. "The Management-Science Paradox" occurs when in munificent times the analytic capacity of organizations is unused and when in critical times "you need it, you do not have it and cannot use it anyway" (p. 180). The resource slack and expertise is usually gone.
3. "The Free-Exiter Problem" describes the condition wherein innovative, creative people who were with the organization through the good times leave during difficult times of restraint when their skills are most needed. These talented people usually have the most employment mobility and are difficult to attract to declining organizations.
4. "The Tooth Fairy Syndrome" is usually part of the initial disbelief of the reality of environmental decline and that it will go away when funding is restored by someone. Strategic decision making is difficult in this dysfunctional climate.
5. "The Participation Paradox" can be expressed by the question: How can rational cutbacks occur when those participating in the decisions are targets for restraint?
6. "The Forgotten Deal" involves the concept of multi-year bargaining, where an agreement is struck between managers that

one would experience a cut one year and the other in a subsequent year. Managers are resistant to these arrangements, as the other party to the bargain may not be around in the future.

7. "Mandates Without Money" relates to the situation where public organizations are compelled to adopt policies without the accompanying financial assistance. An example would be making a facility accessible to the disabled, thereby consuming an already lean renovation and repair budget.
8. "The Productivity Paradox," stated simply, means it takes money to save money. For example, money is required for training and equipment costs. Staff layoffs usually entail contractual obligations which are costly.
9. "The Efficiency Paradox" highlights the consequence of across-the-board cuts which penalize efficient departments and therefore reinforce inefficiency. Inefficient units possess slack and to improve performance must merely emulate the practices of efficient departments.

The effective response, according to Petrie and Alpert (1983), means "establishing a new stable equilibrium with the environment by changing basic strategies, mission, or organizational structure" (p. 100). In order to begin this process the raison d'etre, or mission, of the college must be determined. Bowen (1987) quoted Father Theodore Hesburgh, past-president of Notre Dame University, upon the occasion of his retirement: "The very essence of leadership is you have to have a vision. . . . It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet" (p. 68).

Institutional Mission and Planning

Successful adaptation of colleges to their potentially hostile environments necessitates, as a precondition, a review and reaffirmation of the organizational mission before planning the strategic response. "The mission of the institution is the driving force," states Peck (1984, p. 284). He believes in the importance of consensus and commitment to a mission which rests upon the human need for transcendence. Chaffee (1984), in her study of strategic responses of 14 colleges, concludes that

> this study indicates that sincerity, diligence, and even sophisticated analyses of demand cannot overcome the absence of a shared perception of what the college is about and why it matters or a shared conviction that it is capable of making good on its promises. (p. 233).

A sense of shared mission is paramount and is of more importance than operational or strategic turnaround in determining recovery (Hardy, 1987).

Uncertainty about college goals can have serious consequences. Field research conducted on unsuccessful or closed colleges revealed serious disagreement and confusion over college goals, values and mission (Jonsen, 1984). One of the most fundamental problems of administration in the public sector according to Behn (1984) is to determine the purpose or mission of an agency. He claims it is impossible to manage without purposes. The first step in positioning an institution for the future involves the establishment of a mission statement expressed in operational terms, and valued by the various college constituencies. The next step is to proceed with "an assessment of an institution's enrollment flows, an assessment of the institutional environment, program review, and contingency planning" (Zammuto, 1986, p. 54).

In this regard Mayhew (1980) asserts that the most important of all college management activities is to plan. Past munificent times called upon management to react. The environment of the 1980s and 1990s will require long- and short-range planning as a central activity. Mayhew identifies seven major elements of planning which should be considered and be made explicit: "(1) the statement of mission, (2) the external environment, (3) internal assumptions, (4) program objectives, (5) foundation plans, (6) budgets, and (7) evaluation plans" (p. 116).

Organizational theorists (Cameron, 1983, 1984; Chaffee, 1984; Jonsen, 1984; Luce, 1983; Peck, 1984; Petrie and Alpert, 1983; Whetton, 1981; Zammuto, 1986) advocate strategic planning as the effective organizational response to environmental threats. Baldridge and Okimi (1982) state,

> The goal of strategic planning is not so much producing plans as it is making decisions wisely. It is not so much interested in doing things right, it is more concerned with doing the right things. Effectiveness, not efficiency, is the watchword of strategic planning. (p. 16)

Features of academic strategic planning have been identified by Keller (as cited in Jonsen, 1984) and include an active, environmental focus which recognizes that strategy making is competitive. Strategic planning is decision oriented and involves "a blend of rational and economic analysis, political maneuvering, and psychological interplay. It is therefore participatory and highly tolerant of controversy" (p. 182). Organizational change can occur through innovation, reform, or adaptation.

Theoretical Perspectives Relating to Organizational Adaptation

The body of literature in organizational theory related to the subject of adaptation has developed quite extensively since its emergence in 1970 (Cameron, 1984). In reference to the many conceptualizations of organizational adaptation, Astley and Van de Ven (1983) indicate that "pluralism encourages excessive theoretical compartmentalization" (p. 245) and Ulrich and Barney (1984) caution that "proponents of different theoretical perspectives run the risk of arguing past one another" (p. 471). Anomalies, contradictions and issues concerning organizations and their environments will be explored, as will efforts to integrate various orientations.

Scott (1987) succinctly states the organization/environment relationship: "Every organization exists in a specific physical, technological, cultural, and social environment to which it must adapt" (p. 19). The influence of environments upon organizations is viewed by Aldrich (1979) as through a "process of making available or withholding resources, and organizational forms can be ranked in terms of their efficacy in obtaining resources" (p. 61). Dealing with uncertainty in the environment, according to Thompson, and referred to by many organizational theorists, is the "essence of the administrative process" (Bourgeois, 1980, p. 34; Cameron, Kim, & Whetton, 1987, p. 223; Dess & Beard, 1984, p. 56). Accommodating uncertainty in order to develop or maintain the necessary resources to grow or survive is the purpose of organizational adaptation.

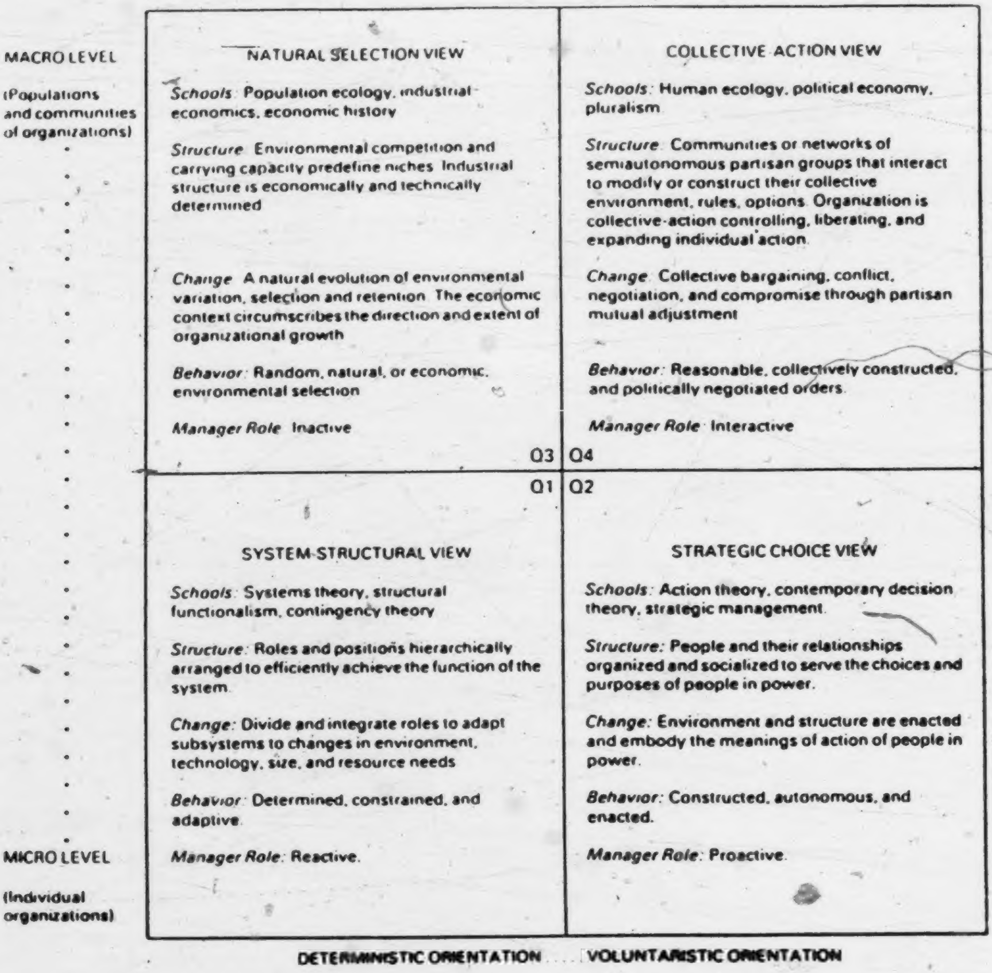
Nonetheless, adaptation is a complex concept, as it can be an outcome or a process, viewed as "intentional-rationality," "copy-behaviour" (Singh et al., 1986, p. 591) or "natural, unwitting" behavior (Scott, 1987, p. 203), which can occur at the individual, sub-unit, organizational or organizational field level. Definitions of adaptation usually emphasize the interactive nature of the organization(s) and the environment.. Weick (1979) enjoins theorists to "think in circles" in conceptualizing organization/environment relationships. Ackoff and Emery (1972) refer to adaptation as "the ability of an individual or system to modify itself or its environment . . . so as to regain at least some of its lost efficiency" (p. 125). Adaptation, conclude Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), "is a dynamic process that is the result of the relative strength and type of power or dependency between organization and environment" (p. 347).

However, as mentioned earlier, organizational adaptation has been defined as "the modifications and alterations in the organization or its components in order to adjust to changes in the external environment" (Cameron, 1984, p. 123). It is important to note that adaptation is predicated upon changes motivated by the environment and is therefore different from planned change or organizational development. An organization's environment is the external context as a whole and therefore includes demographic, economic, political, social, organizational and technological elements (Jonsen, 1984). The open-system perspective of organizations has been adopted, which, according to Scott (1987), conceptualizes organizations as "coalitions of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors" (p. 23).

Theoretical Overview

Theorists have recently conceptualized adaptation in many different ways. Four major approaches will be described using supporting literature from other theorists: Population Ecology, Strategic Choice, Random Organizational Action, and Interpretive Theory. The Strategic Choice approach to adaptation has been further subdivided into six theoretical orientations, namely, life-cycle, contingency, resource dependency, institutionalization, organizational learning, and organizational strategy. The different theories will be compared, followed by a discussion of the salient issues. The natural selection (ecological) and strategic-choice (adaptation) theories are common to each conceptualization, as is the perspective that the most successful approach is the integrated one. The following groupings are all seen to be different forms of adaptation including natural selection, which is "adaptation determined from without" (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985, p. 338).

Astley and Van de Ven (1983) present their scheme (see Figure 1) by classifying major schools of thought along deterministic-voluntaristic and micro-macro organizational dimensions (p. 247). The resulting quadrants yield strategic choice, collective-action, natural selection and system-structural views, each with its respective distinctive characteristics. A similar approach (see Figure 2) is taken by Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985). The two dimensions ranging from low to high represent environmental determinism and strategic choice, generating four quadrants: natural selection, differentiation, strategic choice and undifferentiated choice (p. 339). Ulrich and Barney (1984) postulate a different view with the population perspective, due to its emphasis upon survival and selection, assuming a metatheoretical position subsumed in



MACRO LEVEL (Populations and communities of organizations)	NATURAL SELECTION VIEW *Schools:* Population ecology, industrial economics, economic history *Structure:* Environmental competition and carrying capacity predefine niches. Industrial structure is economically and technically determined. *Change:* A natural evolution of environmental variation, selection and retention. The economic context circumscribes the direction and extent of organizational growth. *Behavior:* Random, natural, or economic, environmental selection. *Manager Role:* Inactive. Q3	COLLECTIVE ACTION VIEW *Schools:* Human ecology, political economy, pluralism. *Structure:* Communities or networks of semiautonomous partisan groups that interact to modify or construct their collective environment, rules, options. Organization is collective-action controlling, liberating, and expanding individual action. *Change:* Collective bargaining, conflict, negotiation, and compromise through partisan mutual adjustment. *Behavior:* Reasonable, collectively constructed, and politically negotiated orders. *Manager Role:* Interactive. Q4
MICRO LEVEL (Individual organizations)	Q1 SYSTEM-STRUCTURAL VIEW *Schools:* Systems theory, structural functionalism, contingency theory. *Structure:* Roles and positions hierarchically arranged to efficiently achieve the function of the system. *Change:* Divide and integrate roles to adapt subsystems to changes in environment, technology, size, and resource needs. *Behavior:* Determined, constrained, and adaptive. *Manager Role:* Reactive.	Q2 STRATEGIC CHOICE VIEW *Schools:* Action theory, contemporary decision theory, strategic management. *Structure:* People and their relationships organized and socialized to serve the choices and purposes of people in power. *Change:* Environment and structure are enacted and embody the meanings of action of people in power. *Behavior:* Constructed, autonomous, and enacted. *Manager Role:* Proactive.
	DETERMINISTIC ORIENTATION	VOLUNTARISTIC ORIENTATION

Figure 1. Four views of organization and management (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983, p. 247) (Reprinted by permission of Administrative Science Quarterly)

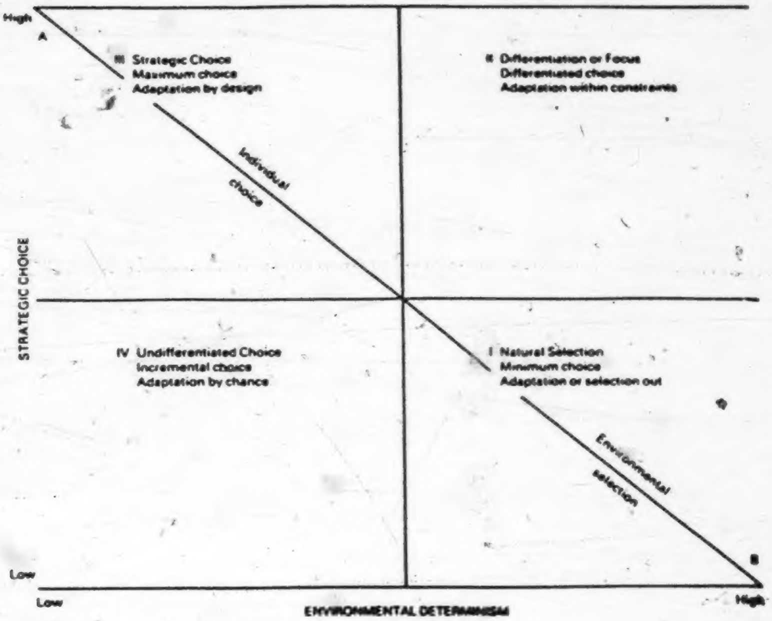

High
A
III Strategic Choice
Maximum choice
Adaptation by design
II Differentiation or Focus
Differentiated choice
Adaptation within constraints
Individual choice
STRATEGIC CHOICE
IV Undifferentiated Choice
Incremental choice
Adaptation by chance
I Natural Selection
Minimum choice
Adaptation or selection out
Environmental selection
B
Low
Low
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM
High

Figure 2. Relation of strategic choices and environmental determinism in organizational adaptation (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985, p. 339) (Reprinted by permission of Administrative Science Quarterly)

which are the resource dependence and efficiency concepts (p. 479). Cameron (1984) views the groupings mentioned above as different forms of adaptation and has categorized them as the population ecology, life-cycle, strategic choice and symbolic action approaches. He conceptualizes the degree of managerial influence along a continuum, with the population ecology approach at one end representing minimum power of organizational adaptability and a maximum power of managerial influence, through the symbolic approach at the other end.

In recent research Singh et al. (1986) studied a population of 389 voluntary social service organizations, the purpose of which was to discover "whether an ecological, an adaptation or a random organizational action perspective more appropriately describes the impact of organizational change," the results of which indicate a complementary relationship and will be discussed later (p. 587). A clear distinction between the ecological and adaptation perspectives is somewhat arbitrary since, as Singh et al. acknowledge, recent works of Hannan and Freeman (1984) have incorporated voluntary organizational change into ecological theory (p. 588). The conceptual orientation of Singh et al., slightly modified, will be used to explore the various approaches.

Population Ecology

Fundamental to the population ecology or natural selection approach is the concept of "niche" (i.e., subunits of the environment which support organizations). According to Zammuto, Whetton, and Cameron (1983), a niche is defined as "the intersection of available resources and the demands for services in the environment that create the potential for an organization, or population of organizations, to exist" (p. 94). Variations in niche size or shape lead to organizational adaptation. A change in niche size (e.g., reduction in resources) encountered by a population of organizations renders the specialist organizations the most adaptive, while changes in niche shape (e.g., some organizational activities no longer supported) dictate the generalist organizations to be the most adaptive (Cameron, 1984).

In addition, the continuity with which environmental change occurs is another factor to be taken into account. Change of niche shape and size can be gradual and continuous with past experience or, at the other extreme, can be precipitous and therefore discontinuous with past experience. Continuous change is perceived as opportunity by managers, and the more discontinuous the change, the more apt administrators are to respond quickly (Zammuto et al., 1983).

The following four conditions of decline have different implications for educational organizations and require particular managerial coping strategies. A gradual and continuous decline in student supply is termed "erosion," while a discontinuous decline in enrollment is labelled "contraction." "Dissolution" refers to gradual shifts in student demand in fields of study, and "collapse" represents a dramatic movement away from program offerings. Zammuto et al. (1983) postulate that there are likely strategic responses which administrators make to each of these conditions. For example, the reaction to erosion is usually slight internal "realignments," while, on the other hand, in conditions of contraction, management will take more drastic measures and "reconstruct" education programs. Dissolution is an indication that the organization's niche is changing shape; therefore the administrative response would most likely emphasize "expansion" or merging of programs. It is unlikely that management would have experience under conditions of a total enrollment collapse, but the resulting administrative behavior would involve some form of "experimentation," the goal of which would be short-term survival.

Therefore, the population ecology orientation deemphasizes managerial intentionality because "the environment is viewed as such a powerful and pervasive force that it selects those organizational forms (or adaptations) that are to persist and other organizational forms die out" (Cameron, 1984, p. 124).

As Astley and Van de Ven (1983) point out, niches are "intractable to manipulation by single organizations"; therefore adaptation is limited

(p. 249). Akin to biological processes, some populations and organizations are selected for survival, while others disappear. Selection mechanisms are the interactions between the characteristics of populations and environmental conditions which lead to differential selection (Ulrich & Barney, 1984). The foregoing is an example of the principle of natural selection McKelvey & Aldrich (1983) borrowed from the "biological species concept." They also advocate the application of other aspects of natural selection theory to populations of organizations, specifically the principles of variation, retention and diffusion and the struggle for existence (p. 114). McKelvey and Aldrich hold that organizational science and research should "improve the description and classification of organizational forms, define more homogeneous groupings and specify the limited conditions under which predictions may be expected to hold true" (p. 101). Therefore they argue that by using the biological model of classifiability, generalizability and predictability, organizational research can then be improved. Inherent to this perspective of the "pure" ecological theorists is an immutable environment. This "anti-adaptation" view totally negates voluntary adaptation by the organization, an issue which will be explored later.

However, environmental conditions are shaped by competitive, legal, political and technological factors. Recent research by Tushman and Anderson (1986) illustrates the importance of technology for not only a given population, but also other populations within technologically independent communities. They emphasize the dynamic nature of technology in the environment and conclude:

> Technology advances through the competition between alternative technologies promoted by rivalrous organizations. At the organizational level, technological action, such as investment in research and development and external venturing, may be a powerful lever in directly shaping environmental conditions and, in turn, organizational adaptation. (p. 463)

Structural inertia and life-cycle theory. The life-cycle approach to adaptation is usually contained within population ecology theories in some form, as it follows closely the birth, mortality and evolution of organizations as a result of the selection process (Betton & Dess, 1984). Central to the idea of the birth and death of organizations is the concept of structural inertia, which is reduced by such factors as sunk costs, historical precedent, political resistance to change, and "the tendency for precedents to become normative standards" (Hannan & Freeman, 1988, p. 76). According to Astley and Van de Ven (1983), Hannan and Freeman, in their early formulations, conceptualized an intractable inertia which would not allow organizations to adapt to a depletion of resources and were "selected out," while new organizational forms, as a result of the shifting resources, were "selected in," therefore accounting for organizational mortality and birth (p. 254). Thus, the survival of organizations is determined by environmental variations. It is significant that Hannan and Freeman have recently proposed a modification to their original concept of structural inertia, which allows for organizational adaptation:

> Structural inertia is seen as a consequence of selection processes rather than a precursor to them. They have also elaborated the structural inertia concept in relative and dynamic terms. When environmental conditions change at a faster rate than the rate of structural reorganization, organizations have relatively inert structures. (Singh et al., 1986, p. 588)

Therefore, as organizations grow older structural inertia increases because organizational members learn to trust and co-operate with each other and, consequently, such organizations are more resistant to being selected out. Significant reorganization or change can place organizations in a precarious situation, since the structural inertia is weakened, resulting in an increased vulnerability to environmental forces. Empirical support for this phenomenon has been demonstrated in a study by Carroll and Delacroix (1988) of the effects of publisher succession in the newspaper industry.

A related concept is Hannan and Freeman's "liability of newness" thesis, which posits that a new organization's ability to adapt to environmental forces is restricted by undeveloped structural inertia and, in part, explains why over half of the businesses that failed in the United States in 1980 were five years old or less (Scott, 1987, p. 167). The larger and older the organization, the greater the structural inertia, therefore the more control the organization can exercise over the environment (Betton & Dess, 1984). Individual organizations have less adaptive capacity than populations of organizations which develop interorganizational adaptive strategies (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983). Large, complex organizations with greater structural inertia and resources can be "ecologically insulated" from environmental changes (Betton & Dess, 1984, p. 752).

The life-cycle approach to adaptation allows for more managerial discretion and conceptualizes the organization as a unit naturally evolving through various stages of development. Cameron (1984) observes that unless management intervenes, organizations follow predictable stages, each requiring the institution to develop unique organizational characteristics.

Cameron (1984) hypothesizes four separate stages, each with its own distinctive set of leadership problems. The first stage is referred to as "creativity and entrepreneurship," and is typified by such growth aspects as adjusting to the environmental niche, developing a set of values and consolidating resources. The characteristic problem confronting the management at this stage is developing an identity and securing resources to sustain the organization. The second stage, "collectivity," involves the commitment and cohesion of members with the emergence of a structure and a communication system. The pervading problem at this stage is building integrated infrastructures. The third stage, "formalization," is characterized by the reduction of flexibility through the institutionalization of policies and procedures, routinizing activities and stabilizing the workforce. The problem facing management in stage three is improving efficiency. The fourth stage focuses upon "elaboration of structure," in which management employs renewal strategies in an attempt to overcome the problem of rigidity and conservatism (p. 126).

The last stage of organizational decline and death Bedeian (1984) attributes to organizational atrophy, vulnerability, loss of legitimacy and environmental entropy. Hedberg, Nystrom, and Starbuck (1976, pp. 49-54) and Bedeian (1984, p. 338) refer to an adaptive four-phase cycle in the organizations as it moves through the various life-cycle stages: (1) "doing as before, but more," (2) "weathering the storm," (3) "unlearning yesterday," and (4) "inventing tomorrow" (p. 338).

Thus, the life-cycle approach is less deterministic than the population ecology approach and incorporates the provision of managerial influence in the sequential development of the organization. Cameron

(1984) states that administrative action "can help determine which stage is returned to after stage four" (p. 127). In addition, the speed through which the organization moves through the various evolutionary stages can also be determined by management. The upcoming strategic choice perspective incorporates even more managerial control in the organization's destiny.

Strategic Choice

The population ecology perspective places emphasis on environmental forces in shaping the organization, although, as has been demonstrated through the revised structural inertia concept and Cameron's (1984) life-cycle approach, management can, to a limited degree, influence organizational adaptation within the ecological context. The polar opposite view is the strategic choice or adaptation by design illustrated in quadrant 2 of the Astley and Van de Ven (1983) diagram (Figure 1) and quadrant III of the Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985) diagram (Figure 2). The strategic choice view therefore is typified by a voluntaristic orientation at the individual organization level, with a high degree of strategic choice and low environmental determinism.

Bourgeois (1980) summarizes the strategic choice approach:

> The development of strategies to guide organizational activities is a key managerial function, and that guidance is accomplished through the effective co-alignment of organizational resources with environmental conditions. (p. 37)

Organizations enjoy influence (power) over others in the task environment. According to Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), "An organization can purposively enact, define, and otherwise affect its domain" (p. 340). Therefore, organizational adaptation is by design. Organizations are not "at the mercy of an immutable environment; rather, they can act and influence their environments" (Cameron, 1984, p. 127). How, and to what degree, they influence the environment are the factors which distinguish between the various sub-orientations of the strategic choice approach. Under the rubric of "Organizational Adaptation Theory," Singh et al. (1986) have clustered various strategic-choice themes, which will be described: Contingency Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, Institutionalization Theories, Organizational Strategy Theory (Strategic Choice), and Organizational Learning Theory (pp. 589-590). The Collective Action view of Astley and Van de Ven (1983), the Interpretive theory of Chaffee, and the Enacted Environment approach of Weick have been added to the themes to increase their comprehensiveness.

Contingency theory. According to Astley and Van de Ven (1983), contingency theory is subsumed under the System-Structural View (Figure 1). They note that contingency theory was preceded and influenced by classic management theory and the theory of bureaucracy. A common deterministic orientation is shared by the various contingency theories in that change is a result of exogenous shifts in the environment. Organizational adaptation is achieved through a reactive management role and involves internal structural alignment with the environment. Performance levels and survival chances are determined by the degree of fit between the organizational structure and the contextual features of size, environment, and technology.

The research of Lawrence and Lorsch explored how organizations accommodate uncertainty in the environment by modifying their structures through integration and differentiation. Meyer (1979) and Bourgeois (1980) claim the studies of Lawrence and Lorsch may be seriously flawed based upon subsequent research by Tosi et al. and Downey et al. The problem with Lawrence and Lorsch's study was that in attempting to measure organizations' environmental uncertainty, they "depended entirely on subjective data from managers, but treated the data as if they were characteristics of some objectively real environment" (Bourgeois, 1980, p. 34). Meyer (1979) discussed how Huber empirically demonstrated that perceived environmental uncertainty was partially a product of group structure and "organizational structure generates uncertainty rather than the other way around" (p. 491). The foregoing challenge notwithstanding, contingency theory, based on extended rationality on the part of managers, predicts a relation between structure-environment match and performance (Scott, 1987).

Resource dependency theory. This perspective is defined as organizations maximizing their power. The proponents of this view "characterize the links among organizations as a set of power relations based on exchanges of resources" (Ulrich & Barney, 1984, p. 472). A number of assumptions underly the resource dependence orientation: (1) organizations are assumed to be comprised of internal and external coalitions which are formed to influence and control behaviour; (2) organizations face uncertainty in acquiring scarce and valued resources in the environment; (3) organizations attempt to acquire control over resources which minimize their dependence on other organizations and, whenever possible, encourage the dependence of other organizations on themselves (Ulrich & Barney, p. 472). By minimizing resource uncertainty, organizations adapt to the environment singly or collectively; or sometimes act upon the environment with the purpose of changing it. Scott (1987) maintains that the resource dependent approach is most useful in accounting for the adaptation of a single organization over a short period of time. Salancik and Pfeffer's (1974) seminal research in the distribution of power among university departments as a result of acquiring scarce resources demonstrated clearly the resource dependency position. They found subunit power is attributed to those university departments which obtain critical resources and "power derived from acquiring resources is used to obtain more power--the rich get richer" (p. 470).

Further, Tushman (1977) conducted related research by investigating the boundary-spanning activities in the innovation process of an organization's research and development department. The process of adaptation involved the resource acquisition of information. He found that "special boundary roles evolve in the organization's communication network to fulfill the essential function of linking the organization's internal network to external sources of information" (p. 587). This research highlights the critical role of boundary spanning and scanning in organizational adaptation.

More recently, Tolbert (1985) investigated the relationship between resource dependence and administrative structure in institutions of higher education. After studying structural configurations of funding offices in public and private colleges, she concluded, "The need to ensure a stable flow of resources from external sources of support partially determines administrative differentiation" (p. 1). Her study supports the concept of adaptation from the contingency and the resource dependence perspectives.

Hodge and Anthony (1984) have developed a model of organizational sensoring and a subsequent organizational design. Sensors serve as environmental filtering devices which operate according to four strategies they refer to as the "Taxonomy of Linkages," specifically: (1) imperviousness; the withdrawal model--Organizations which adopt this model try to seal themselves off from their environment; (2) selective imperviousness--In this model the organization is selective as to what the linkage is connected; (3) adaptiveness--Here the linking systems adapt to or are contingent upon the environment; (4) action-adaptation--Beyond adaptation, this model calls for the organization to become a change agent (p. 187). Organizational structures and processes then are directly affected by the environment. Hodge and Anthony suggest the establishment of boundary spanning units as useful for organizations in uncertain environments.

Therefore the environment is not seen to be a set of intractable restrictions as adaptation can occur through boundary spanning activities, political negotiation, and interorganizational coalitions such as mergers, joint ventures and interlocking directorates in order to acquire resources.

Institutionalization theory. Similar to Astley and Van de Ven's (1983) collective action view (Figure 1), institutionalization is described by Singh et al. (1986) as a conforming force in the environment which encourages organizations to align their structures based on "rationalized myths" (p. 590). By imitating other organizations the legitimacy of the organization is enhanced, therefore increasing its chances of survival. This phenomenon has been referred to by De Maggio and Powell (1983) as "institutional isomorphism" and specifically "mimetic isomorphism," which is a tendency for organizations sharing the same organization field to imitate each other in the face of environmental uncertainty (p. 151). Coercive isomorphism (rules and regulations) and normative isomorphism (professional standards) are also responsible for the tendency of organizations to become homogeneous. Adler (1987) suggests that there is a process (adaptive) taking place within organizations, "but very little of the research done focuses on these processes" (p. 11). An exception to Adler's comment is the research into 78 case studies on decision-making processes by Nutt (1984). He found that 41 percent of the cases used historical model processes (mimetic isomorphism), while only 15 percent were innovative approaches. Nutt's research indicates that when senior managers were faced with critical decision making, they employed "off-the-shelf" imitative practices of other organizations in their field as opposed to considering more creative adaptive strategies.

Organizational learning theory. Singh et al. (1986) state that organizational learning is also an adaptive view of organizational change and cite various theoretical orientations: program modification, standard operating procedures or goals, or routines based on feedback from organizational environments (p. 590). Petrie and Alpert (1983) stress the importance of organizational learning and apply Argyris and Schon's concept of single- and double-loop learning in addressing the problem of retrenchment in higher education. The organizational learning perspective indicates that organizational change will usually have adaptive consequences for organizations if the organizational environment has been properly enacted. The organizational learning perspective is particularly powerful when used in conjunction with the organizational strategy theory, which follows.

Organizational strategy theory. This approach is similar to strategic choice in Astley and Van de Ven's (1983) quadrant 2 (Figure 1) and Hrebeniak and Joyce's (1985) quadrant III (Figure 2). The organizational strategy orientation developed as a reaction to the passive or reactive theories of organizational adaptation and has taken a proactive "action frame of reference" (Astley and Van de Ven, p. 249). Consequently, a variety of approaches have come to the fore--exchange, symbolic, negotiated order, interaction, phenomenological, ethnomethodological and, more recently, interpretive (Chaffee, 1984). In reference to Figure 1, Astley and Van de Ven state:

> As the figure outlines, the strategic choice view draws attention to individuals, their interactions, social constructions, autonomy, and choices, as opposed to the constraints of their role incumbency and functional interrelationships in the system. Both environment and structure are enacted to embody the meanings and actions of individuals--particularly those in power. Managers are regarded as performing a proactive role; their choices are viewed as autonomous, and their acts are viewed as energizing forces that shape the organizational world. (p. 249)

Strategic planning is very evident in the current organizational literature. Organizational theorists (Cameron, 1983, 1984; Chaffee, 1984; Jonsen, 1984; Petrie & Alpert, 1983; Whetton, 1981; Zammuto, 1986) advocate strategic planning as the effective organizational response to threats from the environment. Fundamental to the organizational strategy approach is the notion that the organization can purposely enact, define, and otherwise affect its domain and the exogenous conditions under which it desires to compete (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985).

The strategic choice approach incorporates more managerial influence in directing the organization than the population ecology or life-cycle approaches. "Expanding information search capacities while constraining information-processing requirements in order to make the choices more reasonable," according to Cameron (1984, p. 135), is the fundamental aim of the strategic choice approach.

Cameron (1983) investigated successful turnaround strategies of industries, e.g., tobacco firms, under severe threat, and found the strategies could be grouped into three categories: domain defense, domain offense, and domain creation. The purpose of domain defense was to preserve the legitimacy of the core jurisdiction of the industry. In the case of the tobacco industry, large amounts of money were invested in research and lobbying, the outcome of which was to buy time to choose the appropriate direction. Domain offense strategies were designed to expand organizational spheres of business. Domain creation involved diversification into new areas of business.

Successful tobacco firms survived by effectively manipulating and adapting to the external environment rather than looking inward for efficiency. The underlying maxim of this approach is "doing the right things (effectiveness) rather than doing things right (efficiency)" (Cameron, 1983, p. 370).

Effective management strategies which were successful in the private sector have applicability to the post-secondary education sector. In spite of internal organizational differences, research into hospitals, publishing firms or transportation, electronics, information-service companies and universities has demonstrated that all organizations face similar conditions of decline in the environment.

The following are important internal and external factors which public and private sector administrators should monitor. External factors include: lead time, clarity of the problems faced, consensus of external constituencies, domain choice flexibility, political slack, severity of the threat, duration of the threat and source of the threat. Internal factors which should be monitored include: economic slack, previous experience of administrators, internal distribution of resources, resource dependence of subunits, traditional role of administrators, strategic competence of the institutions, size and complexity (Cameron, 1983, p. 373).

Empirical evidence indicates that flexibility, creativity and anticipation on the part of top administrators can lead to effective adaptation, while conservatism may result in catastrophe for the organization. Successful managers have adopted strategic choice approaches involving domain defense by activating support groups, domain offense through the expansion of markets, and domain-creation strategies which may include totally new programming, new partnerships with public and private organizations, and other forms of joint venture. By combining the three strategies, educational administrators may counterbalance efficient and conservative response tendencies.

Random Organizational Action

Organizational action, which on the surface may appear to be successful in intentional organizational adaptation, may, in truth, be something different. Some theorists adhere to the "myth of rationality" idea referred to by Morgan (1986), which encourages managers to ascribe "patterns of action as legitimate, credible and normal" and therefore avoid painful debate and anxiety in recognizing the reality of ambiguity and uncertainty (p. 135). Singh et al. (1986) allude to a perspective which contends that there is no relationship between organizational change and organizational mortality and cite the work of Weick and March, who suggest that under certain conditions "organizational learning can be superstitious" (p. 591). By incorrectly enacting the environment, cause-effect relations are ascribed which, in fact, are non-existent. This phenomenon is consistent with attribution theory, which predicts that administrators will attribute success to personal factors and failures to environmental factors (Cameron, 1983).

Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985) have labelled quadrant IV (Figure 2) "adaptation by chance," which includes "muddling through" and "garbage can" descriptions of organizational behaviour. In the absence of strategic planning and rationality, "arationality and even capriciousness" can explain action over time (p. 342). They conclude that the "adaptation by chance" state is temporary and, since the adaptation process is dynamic, the position of the organization will change as a consequence of changes in the environment or strategic choices.

The law of requisite variety postulated by Ashby, as observed by McKelvey and Aldrich (1983), held that, in order to adapt to "an uncertainly varying environment, organizations had to have an equivalent amount of internal variety" (p. 122). Therefore, by introducing such unusual variations as Miller's "galumphing," which is defined as "patterned voluntary elaboration or complication of process," and heeding Weick's call for effective organizations to be "garrulous, clumsy, superstitious, hypocritical, monstrous, octopoid, wandering, and grouchy," requisite variety may be achieved, albeit inefficiently over the short term (p. 122). Weick's point is that organizations may be too organized and too rational; therefore whimsical and awkward variations may have a survival value.

Similarly, Meyer (1979) highlights the importance of nonrational perspectives--rationality as retrospective (Weick's notion of enacted environments), decisions as essentially random (March and Olsen's garbage can model), and structure as decoupled from activity due to ceremonial requirements (Meyer and Rowan's formulation of institutional organizations as myth and ceremony) (p. 488). Changes in organizational structures are not necessarily developed as a result of rational adaptation but, according to Meyer, are internal and external signalling devices. He states, "Indeed, an argument could be made that the results of most organizational research, even that guided by rational theories, is not inconsistent with nonrational models" (p. 488). Ulrich and Barney (1984), in reference to the unpredictable nature of the selection pressures in the environment, conclude that successful firms may "simply be lucky" (p. 475).

Adaptation Versus Selection

The tension between the advocates of the adaptation and population ecology theories is evident in the literature. There is a similarity between this controversy in organizational theory and the nature-nurture debate in psychology. Both arguments involve the unfolding of natural processes as opposed to intentionality or purposive human intervention.

While most theorists indicate that both perspectives are useful and necessary in understanding organizational adaptation, some writers support the prepotency of either voluntarism or determinism. McKelvey and Aldrich (1983) are unequivocal. While they concede that conditions within a niche can be managed, "the broader environment is not open to influence" (p. 121). They continue, "Adopting the population perspective would transform the field of organizational science" (p. 125). Aldrich (1979) asserts that the strategic choice approach is severely limited in its impact because "environmental selection processes set the limits within which rational selection among alternatives takes place" (p. 160). Betton and Dess (1984) claim that models of organization-environment relationships are an alternative to "the dominant adaptation perspective" (p. 751).

On the other hand, Scott (1987) regards both management and ecological orientations as valuable but takes the side of strategic choice because organizations can voluntarily modify their structures over short and long periods of time. He adheres to the open system theory and believes that "some population ecologists have overemphasized the structural rigidity or inertia of organizations" (p. 203). Betton and Dess (1984) emphasize that empirical work on the limits of adaptability have not provided evidence to support the superiority of the ecological position nor "the prominence of environment selection pressures over adaptive responses" (p. 755). They refer to Perrow's criticism of population ecology models that large organizations do not necessarily adapt to the environment; they "create" the environment (p. 756).

Recent research by Cameron (1986) into organizational effectiveness and its predictors in 29 colleges and universities demonstrated the usefulness of the strategic choice approach in the improvement of institutional performance over time. He adds, "In contrast, the natural selection model (Aldrich, 1979; Campbell, 1969; Hannan and Freeman, 1977), which emphasizes the prominence of the environment as the major determiner of organizational performance, receives little support from these data" (p. 104). Institutions, he suggests, may be effective "in spite of their environments more than because of them" (p. 107).

Related research by Hambrick (1981) into the relationship between environmental strategy among executives in hospitals, colleges and insurance companies supported the contention that "environment and strategy can be conceptually and empirically distinguished and that they both can affect internal process" (p. 269). In their study of 389 Toronto volunteer service organizations, Singh et al. (1986) found the extreme ecological and the extreme adaptation arguments were not supported by the data, although there was evidence to support a moderate co-existence of the two positions. Their results confirmed Hannan and Freeman's assertion that ecological theory applies more to core properties (p. 607). They concur with Scott (1987) that "the resource dependency approach emphasizes the more peripheral features of organizations" (p. 202).

A similar view incorporates the two approaches from the perspective of organizational size. Astley and Van de Ven (1983) refer to the population ecologist's admission that the natural selection model works better for small, powerless organizations in sparse environments than large organizations in munificent environments. Ulrich and Barney (1984) postulate the complementary roles of the two models by recognizing the population perspective as a metatheory and the resource dependence and other adaptive processes as accounting for "the idiosyncratic evolution of organizations over time" (p. 478).

Clearly, theoretical positions towards the two approaches are wide ranging, although, as will be shown, most theorists call for an integration of the various perspectives. No orientation encountered in the literature purports the exclusive adherence to a particular model for all situations.

Theoretical Perspectives Relating to Interpretive Theory

Compared to the approaches described earlier, the "symbolic action" (Cameron, 1984, p. 129) or "interpretive" model (Chaffee, 1984, p. 213) allows for the most managerial influence over the environment. The interpretive approach is a useful conceptualization and is important to this study because its essence is that individuals make interpretations from which they derive meaning. Interpretation, as defined by Daft and Weick (1984), "is the process through which information is given meaning and actions are chosen" (p. 294). An interpretive strategy is employed when "organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favor the organization" (Chaffee, 1985b, p. 94). This approach focuses upon changes in symbols, interpretations and stories rather than structure, technology and resource acquisition. Organizations are viewed as "social constructions of reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The organization is seen as a network of interacting participants who experience shared meaning. The leader manages the meaning through communication, symbols, and rituals. Administration involves social consensus through adaptation strategies, which includes language, ritual and symbolic behavior. Cameron indicates the key management methods are as follows: interpreting history and current events, using rituals and ceremonies, using time and measurement, redesigning physical space and introducing doubt (p. 131).

The Emergence of Interpretive Strategy

Chaffee (1984) conceptualizes the adaptive (strategic choice) approach as being predicated upon an organismic, coherent, rational, goal-directed open system where members of the organization receive returns for performance, which are viewed as costs to the organization. Cameron, as previously mentioned, organized the various theoretical orientations to adaptation along a continuum which, at one end, portrays the manager as powerless in influencing the organization's adaptability, and, at the other end, the manager has total power in creating adaptability.

Cameron correctly separates the "symbolic action" approach from the "strategic choice" approach but, nevertheless, subsumes the interpretive, symbolic action approach under the rubric of "adaptation model" (p. 129). Chaffee (1984, 1985a, 1985b) clearly differentiates between the adaptive and interpretive models and, in fact, places them at different levels. She states, "The strategy literature typically does not differentiate between the two models and their assumptions" (1984, p. 213). This is an important bifurcation point in the organizational theory literature generally, and in theory related to strategy specifically, as shown in Figure 3. It is at this juncture that interpretive strategy becomes distinct and separate from adaptive strategy. Smircich and Stubbart (1985) state that the adaptive strategies model assumes that environments are objective and are "independent, external, and tangible entities" in which separate "organizations" are embedded (p. 725). Further, they posit that the major task of the adaptive strategists is to determine what strategy "will meet the real demands and real constraints that exist 'out there'" within an objective "environment" (p. 726).

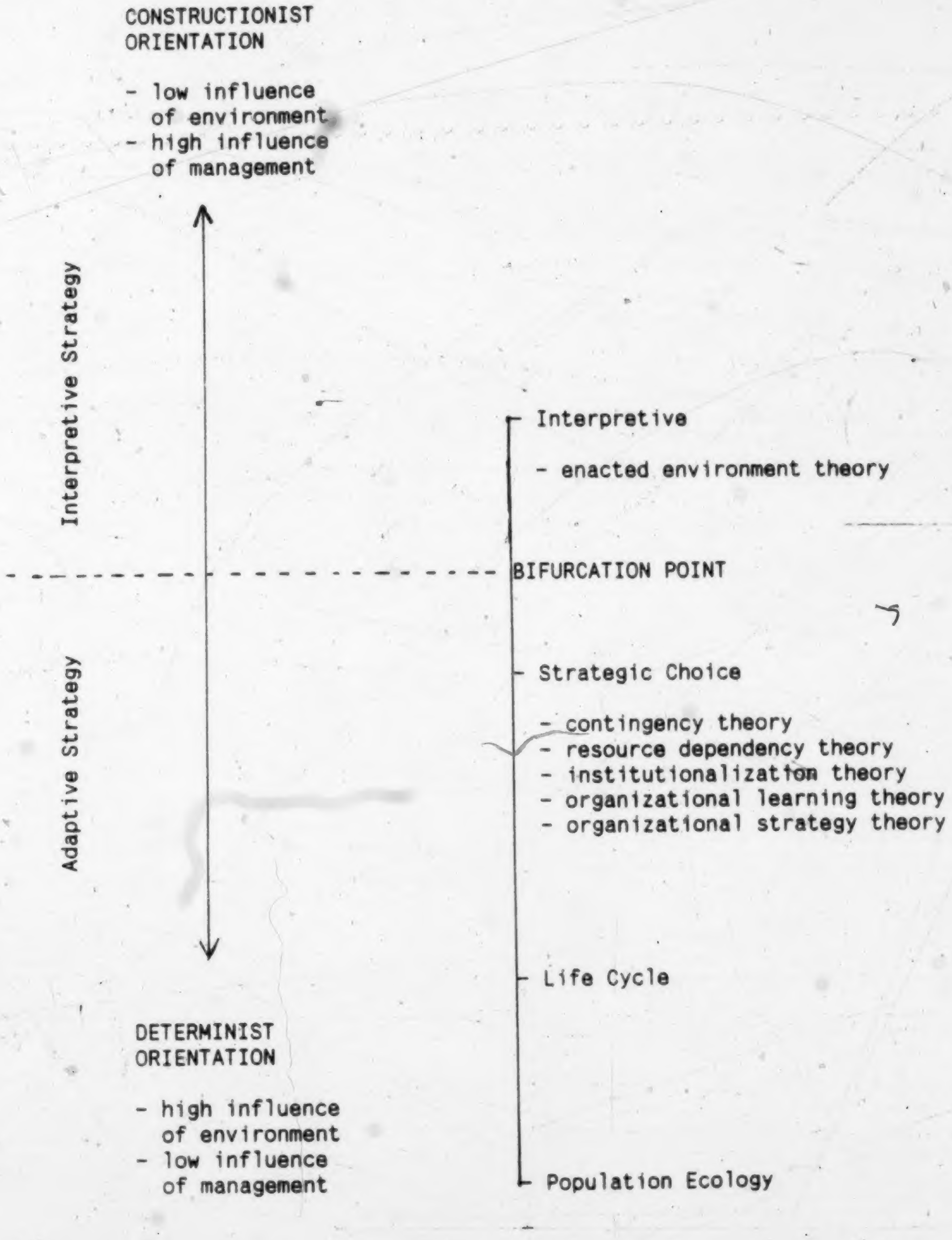

CONSTRUCTIONIST
ORIENTATION
- low influence of environment
- high influence of management
Interpretive Strategy
Adaptive Strategy
Interpretive
- enacted environment theory
BIFURCATION POINT
Strategic Choice
- contingency theory
- resource dependency theory
- institutionalization theory
- organizational learning theory
- organizational strategy theory
Life Cycle
DETERMINIST
ORIENTATION
- high influence of environment
- low influence of management
Population Ecology

Figure 3. Theoretical orientations: adaptation-interpretive continuum (adapted from Cameron, 1984, p. 125)

In contrast, the interpretive approach is one in which Chaffee (1984) views the organization as having no identity apart from its members. The organization exists because participants have consented to act together as long as their individual interests are satisfied. The returns to the members are the justification for the organization's existence. As Chaffee states,

> When participants are understood to be autonomous, willful, self-interested, social beings, communication of all kinds becomes the medium through which the organization exists. Therefore, the management of meaning is a prime opportunity for the exercise of leadership, and organizational culture and politics is an important symptom that the organization is functioning. (p. 221)

Further, the interpretive model is based upon the concept of social contract. A credibility crisis occurs when there is a lack of satisfaction among participants regarding their reasons for organizing. The goal of leadership is to "improve the satisfaction of participants and to increase the credibility of the organization in their eyes" (Chaffee, 1984, p. 222). Chaffee conducted a study of 14 colleges which experienced severe financial difficulties in the 1970s. She arranged into two groups those which made dramatic recoveries and those which did not. The purpose of the study was to determine which strategic approach accounted for resiliency to decline. Chaffee concluded that the adaptive model was useful in assisting colleges in recovery, but it did not explain the faster recovery of the more resilient colleges. The interpretive model, based on the organization as a network of participants, seemed to have accounted for rapid recovery. Chaffee's research has some implications for improving turnaround management:

1. Using an interpretive strategy which directs adaptive strategy is preferable to using an adaptive strategy alone.

2. A clear sense of organizational identity is a precondition to the establishment of an interpretive strategy.
3. Presidents who incorporate symbolic concerns into their leadership will be more effective than those who do not.
4. There is a wide array of strategic approaches which can be effective.
5. The components of a successful recovery strategy are unique to each college (p. 234).

Cameron (1983, 1984) and Chaffee (1984) believe the optimum management strategy is one which combines different and sometimes conflicting approaches. Cameron (1984) makes reference to Janusian thinking, which occurs "when two contradictory thoughts are held to be true simultaneously" (p. 136). Janusian characteristics are important for post-secondary institutions and their administrators as the consideration of co-existing opposites will probably be the most effective orientation in the future. These paradoxical conditions can take the form of process and structure, loose and tight coupling, heterogeneity and homogeneity, high specialization and high generality of roles, flexibility and stability and the continuity of leadership and the infusion of new leaders. The presence of "Janusian thinking in individuals and Janusian characteristics in organizations . . . will produce the adaptability necessary for effective institutions of higher education in the future" (Cameron, 1984, p. 140).

In a similar manner, Peck (1984) suggests a new approach which is based upon the

> symbiotic relationship between task and task-doer. . . . the skill of management consists in identifying points where essentially dissimilar dimensions of an organization come

> together for action and, at those points, finding the combination of skills and behavioral characteristics that will be most effective in getting the task done. (p. 280)

This style of leadership is appropriate for these uncertain times, as "it emerges out of the combination of two essentially dissimilar dimensions [which have] come together for a mutually beneficial purpose" (Chaffee, 1984, p. 281). Cameron and Ulrich (1985) refer to the type of leadership described above as transformational leadership, which involves "a new way of interpreting reality, in a different set of motives, in a higher vision of possibilities, not merely the implementation of alternative actions or plans" (p. 12). Briefly stated, Cameron and Ulrich see transformational leadership as that which permits and encourages organizational change, while Burns (1978) sees transformational leadership as an individual style that seeks to transform/elevate all participants in the organization, including the leader. Cameron and Ulrich, then, are dealing with surface structure, while Burns deals with deep structure.

It is important to recognize symbiosis, the interconnectedness of things, and "choose between those things that can be connected and those that defy connection, remembering that the vital community cannot remain vital if its connections work against each other until all energy is drained away" (Martin, 1984, p. 287).

The enacted environment approach. The unique theory of Karl Weick is heavily interpretive and has similarities with Chaffee's approach. Weick (1979) defines organizing as "a consensually validated grammar for reducing equivocality by means of sensible interlocked behaviors" (p. 3). He conceptualizes the organizing process as being composed of three important sub-processes which reduce equivocality in the external environment: enactment, selection, and retention. Enactment involves the "bracketing of some portion of the stream of experience for further attention," while selection refers to the imposition of "some further set of interpretations on the bracketed portion" (p. 45). The interpreted portions are stored for future use through the process of retention. Social cycles can be clustered under the three processes mentioned above and arranged to form four causal linkages which can be grouped together to form causal maps.

Weick (1979) conceptualizes an external environment which is constructed by individuals through their respective enactment process. He states, "There is no methodological process by which one can confirm the existence of an object independent of the confirmatory process involving oneself" (p. 273). The notion that the organization and the environment are concrete, separate entities is challenged by Weick. While he recognizes the "substances and properties and parts" of environments, he posits that "it is their existence (environment) as an entity that is problematic" (p. 274).

The concept of an enacted environment implies an undifferentiated, uncertain, and ambiguous field in which there are "no threats or opportunities out there . . . just material and symbolic records of action" (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985, p. 726). The strategist, by making connections with past networks of meaning, tries to "make sense" and through interpretation creates new meaning which is then shared by others, usually senior management. Daft and Weick (1984) state, "The interpretation may shape the environment more than the environment shapes the interpretation" (p. 287). The manager takes on the role of interpreter and translates, or gives an interpretation of, the environment for the organization. Adaptation is viewed from a very different perspective as strategists are seen as "adapting to their interpretations [of an environment] . . . that is not objectively knowable" (Ford & Baucus, 1987, p. 369).

Weick (1977a) emphasizes the importance of the enactment process: "How enactment is done is what an organization will know" (p. 277). One enacted environment is the result of prior sensemaking, not an input to it. Therefore, "what a person does is what he eventually will know" (p. 275); to illustrate the point he quotes Bateson: "An explorer can never know what he is exploring until it has been explored" (p. 279). Weick illustrates this point further in referring to Geertz's turn of phrase: "Man is an animal suspended in the webs of significance he himself has spun" (p. 135). Weick states that through talking, organizations find out what they are saying and through action discover what they are doing. "All understanding originates in reflection and looking backwards" (Weick, 1979, p. 194).

In reference to adaptation Weick (1979) stresses that orderliness is overestimated and erroneously given credit for adaptive success. He claims that ambivalence is the optimal compromise, loose coupling promotes adaptation, ignorance is functional, everything flows, adaptation can preclude adaptability, and things keep falling apart (p. 120). Weick (1977b) celebrates the irrational as evidenced by the statement, "Inefficient organizations preserve adaptability" (p. 44). Efficient organizations may have a momentary advantage if they are tightly coupled with the environment, but should the environment change, then "specific adaptations often restrict subsequent adaptability" (p. 39).

Organizational adaptation is usually seen as large-scale organizational adjustments to changing environments. Weick (1984) advocates the scaling down of large problems to "small wins," where confidence generated from the accomplishment of small wins "frequently enacts environments in which the original problem becomes less severe and the next improvement more clear" (p. 47).

Weick (1979), in sharp contrast to some of the theorists cited earlier, questions the value of planning and agrees with Cohen and March (1979), who argue that plans are symbols, advertisements, games, and excuses for interactions (p. 10). He cautions administrators who are zealous planners, as they may "artificially simplify the complexity involved" and thereby interfere with the evolution of "a more complex structure capable of coping with more complex inputs" (p. 103). Lincoln (1985) points out that organizations are most often rational, but in the retrospective sense, and paraphrases Karl Weick: "Intention seldom, if ever, controls action; but because we assume that what appeared to happen did happen, we often conclude that rational models actually work when, in fact, they do not" (p. 9).

Weick (1977a) summarizes his orientation to adaptative and environment-organization relationships:

> If we shift to a more self-conscious efferent imagery and if we blur the boundaries between organizations and environments, and if we selectively use open systems imagery, then we put ourselves in a better position to say that a substantial number of the enacted environments associated with organizations consist of personal ideas that are extended outward, implanted, and rediscovered. (p. 290)

Three Strategic Models

In her analysis of the literature relating to definitions of strategy, Chaffee (1985b) identified three distinct clusters which she named linear, adaptive, and interpretive strategies. Each cluster has distinctive characteristics which bear a close resemblance to three sets derived from Boulding's (1956) General Systems hierarchical framework. The cultural analogy, implicit in interpretive strategy, is much more versatile in organizational analysis than the other two approaches to strategy.

The linear approach implies methodical, step-by-step planning and "consists of integrated decisions, actions, or plans that will set and achieve viable organizational goals" (p. 90). The linear strategy is typified by a rational, goal-directed approach which depicts senior executives as managing a sequential planning and decision-making process which will optimize profits and productivity. Success is predicated upon a tightly coupled, goal-oriented process which is based on a linear projection of the future in a predictable environment. The adaptive and interpretive strategies have been discussed earlier and will be reviewed briefly to facilitate the melding of Chaffee's three models of strategy and Boulding's (1956) General Systems Theory.

The distinguishing characteristic of the adaptive strategy, according to Chaffee (1985b), is the continuous coalignment of the organization and its environment with a relative deemphasis on goal orientation and planning. The adaptive organization is typically loosely coupled, with its composite units relating to a complex yet potentially supportive environment. The permeable boundary between an organization and its environment allows the organization to be sustained as long as it changes with the environment, as opposed to the linear model which implies an organization-environment reconciliation. Chaffee points out that interpretive strategy parallels the developing interest in organizational culture and symbolic management, and views the organization from a social contract perspective. Reality is socially constructed through social interaction where perceptions are "affirmed, modified, or replaced according to their apparent congruence with the perceptions of others" (p. 93). Peterson and Mets (1987) summarize the interpretive organizational literature as treating

> organizations as collections of people who agree to cooperate, more or less, to serve diverse purposes. It assumed that organizational success was due both to the effectiveness of that cooperation and to the perceptions of outsiders about the desirability of associating themselves with the organization as consumers, employees, board members, students, investor, or in other ways. (p. 25)

Symbolic action, communication, improved interactions and connections between stakeholders, and the management of meaning are characteristic of interpretive strategy. The adaptive and interpretive strategies overlap. Whereas the adaptive approach may emphasize changes in physical aspects of outputs, the interpretive approach involves leaders influencing attitudinal change of organizational members towards the organization or its output to improve credibility. In interpretive strategy, states Chaffee (1985b), "organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favor the organization" (p. 94).

Each strategic model offers its unique perspective of how an organization functions. Chaffee (1985b) illustrates this point with the effective analogy of asking a geologist, a climatologist, and a poet to model the Grand Canyon, alluding to the linear, adaptive, and interpretive, respectively. The higher education literature incorporates the three strategies, although Chaffee (1985a) indicates that the major focus in higher education is on adaptive strategy.

The evolution of organizational studies followed the pattern of Boulding's (1956) General Systems Theory, which was proposed to help understand all classes of systems including human systems (Peterson & Mets, 1987). Boulding notes that "each level incorporates all those below it"; therefore, for example, the first five levels of system would be subsumed within the sixth level (animal) (p. 207). Chaffee (1985b) has grouped Boulding's nine levels into clusters of three--basic, intermediate, and complex-- which correspond to the three strategies outlined above. The concepts of Boulding and Chaffee have been integrated and displayed in Figure 4.

The first grouping can be referred to as mechanical and is akin to the linear strategy. At this level structure, budget, design, goals, and hierarchy characterize the activity of management in planning, organizing, and controlling. The intermediate set, or biological grouping, incorporates concepts of life cycle, natural selection, and population ecology, which have been useful metaphors in describing organizations. Chaffee (1985b) notes that this level of biological systems has differentiated receptors analogous to boundary spanning and scanning units in organization. Adaptive strategy, then, corresponds to the biological level as organizations, like organisms, must react to various environmental factors.

The most complex grouping is the cutural set, which is characterized by self-conscious individuals interacting through symbols (language) whose content and shared meaning assume importance. This level

Grouping	Level	System	Characterized by
LINEAR	1. Frameworks	Static	Geography and anatomy of universe
(Mechanical)	2. Clockworks	Simple dynamic	Solar system
BASIC	3. Thermostats	Control mechanism	Homeostasis
ADAPTIVE	4. Cell	Open system	Self maintenance
(Biological)	5. Plant	Genetic-societal	Blueprinted growth
INTERMEDIATE	6. Animal	Knowledge structure	Mobility, teleological behavior, self-awareness
INTERPRETIVE	7. Human	Self-consciousness	Interpretation of symbols
(Cultural)	8. Social organization	Role interactions	Content and meaning of messages
COMPLEX	9. Transcendental	"Ultimates and inescapable unknowlables"	

Figure 4. Boulding's (1956) General Systems Theory modified to incorporate Chaffee's (1985b) Three Models of Strategy

corresponds to the interpretive strategy. Boulding (1956) does not describe the transcendental level 9, other than to refer to it as "the ultimate and inescapable unknowables" which, he postulates, will have some systematic form (p. 205).

Chaffee (1987) applies Boulding's general system directly to the concept of strategy:

> Each system level incorporates those that are less complex. Adaptive systems have machinelike properties, and interpretive systems exhibit both linear and adaptive characteristics. For example, the president's address has structure in its ideas and sequencing, and the president adapts the speech to the nature of the audience and often to audience responses during the speech. Human beings and organizations are interpretive systems. Understanding and working with them requires attention to their characteristics on all three levels. (p. 23)

Chaffee (1985b) states, "Interpretive strategy ignores linear and adaptive strategy" (p. 95), which is in sharp contrast with Boulding's cultural grouping which builds incrementally upon the mechanical and biological clusters. There is nothing inherently more complex in interpretive strategy than in adaptive strategy. Chaffee indicates further that adaptive strategists rarely consider the linear approach, although mapping the three concepts onto Boulding's typology points out that interpretive strategy should incorporate linear and adaptive. Boulding's general system theory has provided useful insights into the strategy models but should be applied judiciously. In the following section the efficacy of the interpretive and adaptive strategies will be discussed.

The organismic and social contract analogy. In a detailed analysis of the respective merits of the organismic and social contract analogy, Keeley (1980) proposes the social contract analogy to be a "superior analytic device." He argues that the organismic analogy has major shortcomings on descriptive, normative, and heuristic dimensions, "that is, it fails to provide a satisfactory picture of organizational reality, entails suspicious implications for organizational change, and impedes organizational inquiry" (p. 377). Keeley views the social organism analogy as "worn," and Chaffee (1984) concurs with his assessment of the metaphor's "intellectual poverty" (p. 219).

The inherent weakness of the organismic analogy is that the will of the participants of the organization, or organism, is conceptualized as being subjugated by the holistic goals of the organization, whereas within the social contract analogy, goals become properties of the individual and not the collective. Therefore, it is appropriate to conceive of participant goals for the organization, thereby accommodating the diversity of individual interest. More recently Gray (1988) states, "Because organizations have no corporeal existence apart from the experiences members have of them, there can be no 'objectives' for an organization, only objectives for individual members" (p. 148). Keeley (1980) concludes that the contractual analogy has a "greater capacity for elaboration," as it can "be applied on several levels of analysis simultaneously," where contracts can be "nested within contracts." The social contract analogy is more comprehensive and offers "a less simplistic criterion of organizational success--satisfaction of all participants rather than the attainment of one or a few goals" (p. 359).

The interpretive strategy is consistent with the social contract analogy and the adaptive strategy with the organismic analogy. Chaffee (1984), in her research into turnaround efforts of 14 colleges, identified both strategies as effective, although she discovered that the interpretive model "seems to have facilitated rapid recovery," and the most effective approach was to establish "an interpretive strategy that guides the adaptive strategy" (p. 234). Martin (1984) urges that attention be given to creating a balance between "adaptation" and "interpretation." By illustration, he employs the following metaphor: "External pressure must be channelled like water through a spillway, thereby generating power to illuminate the internal structure and purpose of the organization" (p. 289). The "external pressure" of environmental forces acting upon an organization has been explained in some depth. Organizations' internal structure of symbols, shared meanings, and traditions plays an important role in the development of an interpretive strategy. Tierney (1988) acknowledges the powerful influence of the environment and "the strong forces that emanate from within" in shaping institutions. The "internal dynamic" of culture is critical and therefore should be concerned with "decisions, actions, and communication on an instrumental and a symbolic level" (p. 3). Organizations exist on two levels, posits March (1984): "The first is the level of action where we cope with the environment we face; the second is the level of interpretation where we fit our history into an understanding of life" (p. 18). The culture of an organization, therefore, should be taken into consideration in developing an effective strategy.

Conclusion

A variety of theoretical perspectives relating to organizational adaptation has been presented. The review of the literature has been arranged into three groupings: (1) research into practice, (2) theoretical perspectives relating to organizational adaptation, and (3) theoretical perspectives relating to interpretive theory. Whetton (1981), Levine (1979), Cameron (1984), Peck (1984), and Petrie and Alpert (1983) posit that successful adaptation to uncertain and turbulent environments requires senior managers to break with past traditional, conservative practices. They enjoin organizational leaders to respond effectively rather than efficiently--to do the right things rather than to do things right. Further, Chaffee (1984), Cameron, Jonsen (1984), Luce (1983), Peck, Petrie and Alpert, Whetton, and Zammuto (1985) stress the importance of strategic planning and an organizational mission in adaptation.

Adaptation has been the focus of much activity among organization theorists. The perspectives of Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), Astley and Van de Ven (1983), Ulrich and Barney (1984), Cameron (1983, 1984, 1986, 1987), Singh and associates (1986), and Weick (1977, 1979, 1983, 1984) have been clustered under the four major headings of population ecology, strategic choice, random organizational action, and interpretive theory. These approaches to adaptation have been further subdivided into six theoretical orientations: life-cycle, contingency, resource dependency, institutionalization, organizational learning, and organizational strategy. The enacted environment formulation of Karl Weick has been given particular attention under the general topic of interpretive theory.

The sequence of these theories has been presented in relation to the degree to which organizations are viewed as being deterministic or voluntaristic. The adaptation/selection controversy which surrounds the adaptation literature has been explored. The review of the literature concludes with a discussion of three strategic models.

While often declaring a preference for a particular orientation, many theorists advocate a combined or integrated approach. Joyce and Hrebiniak (1985) call for "integration rather than differentiation of views" (p. 348). "Organizational phenomena are much too complex to be adequately described by any single theoretical approach" (Tolbert, 1985, p. 12). Cameron (1986) concluded that institutional effectiveness required "multi-faceted managerial strategies" (p. 108). Adaptation and selection approaches are viewed as "complementary rather than contradictory," state Singh et al. (1986, p. 609). "An integrated set of strategic actions" is probably more preferable to "isolated or disjointed strategic actions," posits Chaffee (1985a). Ultimately, the choice of strategy may depend on so many variables that it may be "organization specific" (p. 157). Astley and Van de Ven (1983) contend that organizational theory reflects values and biases and the interplay between theories "is in reality a contest over the future shaping of the organizational world" (p. 270).

Scott (1987) challenges "the sharp dichotomy between inside and outside" (p. 118). Boulding (1978) states, "There is no such thing as an 'environment,' if by this we mean a surrounding system that is independent of what goes on inside it" (p. 31). The folly of many theoretical approaches to organizational adaptation rests in the tacit assumption that there is a clear, absolute demarcation between the environment and the organization.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The theoretical orientation which provides the foundation for the research methodology of this study rests upon the interpretive paradigm as described by Burrell and Morgan (1979). The research was also influenced by the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. The inquiry approach adopted was naturalistic and qualitative. This chapter outlines the process of data collection and data analysis and concludes with a description of the measures employed to ensure trustworthiness.

Theoretical Orientation

Burrell and Morgan (1979) posited four "distinct sociological paradigms," each of which defines "four views of the social world based upon different metatheoretical assumptions with regard to the nature of science and of society" (p. 24). This study was conducted within the context of what Burrell and Morgan have labelled the interpretive paradigm, which is a subjectivist approach that "sees the social world as an emergent social process which is created by the individuals concerned" (p. 28). The goal of the interpretive frame of reference is "to reveal the meaning" of social situations by examining "the subjective-meaning structures governing the ways in which typical individuals act in typical situations" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 90).

This study was also guided by theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, the fundamental tenet of which is that, according to Blumer (1969), "human experience is mediated by interpretation" (p. 2).

Understanding how the interpretations are developed and employed in particular interactive situations is the focus of interest for symbolic interactionists (Jacob, 1987). The symbolic interactionist orientation is based upon the following three premises articulated by Blumer:

> 1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.
> 2. The meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of the social interactions that one has with one's fellows.
> 3. Meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by [people] in dealing with the things [they encounter]. (p. 6)

Interpretation, then, is essential to the symbolic interactionist view, as it is through interpreting that one obtains meaning. Geertz (1973), in reference to his interpretive theory of culture, believes "that man is an animal suspended in the webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 5). Therefore, as organization members communicate over time, "symbols--including language and behavior --evolve and take on meaning" (Huber & Daft, 1987, p. 151). The shared system of meaning which evolves forms the basis for interaction among members of an organization. Stories, myths, ceremonies, logos, anecdotes/jokes have important symbolic significance and can reflect what Dandridge, Mitroff, and Joyce (1980) refer to as "deep structure" in contrast to the "surface structure" which is generally studied in the field of organizational behavior (pp. 81-82). The symbolic interactionist approach posits that "the essence of managerial action is to develop and establish a new shared perspective" when, as a result of unexpected external events, "existing meanings tend to be inadequate for interpreting the information received" (Huber &

Daft, 1987, p. 152). Leadership, then, can be viewed as "the management of meaning" and organizations as "networks of managed meanings" (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p. 270).

Similarly Weick and Daft (1983) in their discussion of the interpretation system approach indicate that the "job of management is to interpret, not to get the work of the organization done"; they refer to the need of management to "make sense of things, to be aware of external events and clues, and to translate them into meaning for organizational participants" (p. 91). Weick and Daft stress that one of the most critical functions of an organization may be the transformation of "the equivocality and randomness outside the organization into specificity and direction within the organization" (p. 88). Smircich and Morgan (1982) point out that because leaders "symbolize the organized situation in which they lead," they are therefore in a position "to influence the sensemaking of others" (p. 269). Cameron (1984) refers to Karl Weick's concept of enacting the external environment and states, "Organizational adaptation comes about through the use of a variety of strategies involving language, ritual, and symbolic behavior designed to modify organization members' shared meanings" (p. 130).

It is through interaction that individuals construct meaning of the world and themselves. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) stress the importance of the construct of "self" in symbolic interaction theory: "The self is the definition people create (through interacting with others) of who they are" (p. 35). Jacob (1987) explains the I as "the impulsive tendency in individuals," while the Me is "the organized set of attitudes and definitions prevailing within the group" (p. 28). She quotes Meltzer and sees self "as a flowing process of interaction between the I and the Me"

(p. 28). People evolve, change, and grow as a result of this interaction process.

Qualitative Research

Consistent with Burrell and Morgan's (1979) interpretive paradigm, qualitative and naturalistic inquiry methods were selected for this study as they were most appropriate given the nature of the research questions and the historical case study approach.

Qualitative inquiry refers to the "nature of the understanding that is sought" (Owens, 1987). He continues, "[It] seeks to understand human behavior and human experience from the actor's own frame of reference, not the frame of reference of the investigator" (p. 181). Therefore, as Smith and Heshusius (1986) observe, qualitative inquiry is predicated upon the position that "reality is made rather than found" (p. 11). The goal of the qualitative researcher is to see "the 'real' world as those under study see it" (Owens, p. 181). Quantitative techniques are inadequate in describing cultural dynamics; therefore, Chaffee and Tierney (1988) advocate the use of qualitative methodology for investigating the culture of higher education. In their summary of qualitative research, Bogdan and Biklen (1982) highlight five important characteristics: (1) the direct data source is the natural setting where the main instrument is the researcher; (2) descriptive data provide the basis for research; (3) the focus of qualitative research is upon process; (4) induction is the mode of data analysis and "emerges from the bottom up" (p. 29); and (5) the primary concern of the qualitative approach is "meaning" (pp. 27-30). Two additional features of qualitative inquiries noted by Burgess (1985) are that studies may be redesigned; therefore, as data collection and analysis proceed, concepts can be modified and, further, data collection and data analysis can occur simultaneously as there are no fixed procedures (p. 9). Bohac (1989) indicates that qualitative research is a term which refers to a cluster of methodologies which fall within the purview of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) interpretive theoretical orientation. She comments further that the naturalistic research paradigm "could be described as a translation of the interpretive orientation into research methodology" (p. 80). Guba and Lincoln (1982) point out that the aim of the naturalistic paradigm is "disciplined inquiry" (p. 234).

While "qualitative" refers to the nature of the understanding that is sought (Owens, 1987), "naturalistic" refers to the ways one seeks to examine reality. Further, the naturalistic perspective posits that organizational behavior must be studied in situ (p. 181). Therefore, as Guba and Lincoln (1982) state,

> The naturalist prefers humans-as-instruments for reasons such as greater insightfulness, their flexibility, their responsiveness, the holistic emphasis they can provide, their ability to utilize tacit knowledge, and their ability to process and ascribe meaning to data simultaneously with their acquisition. (p. 245)

In this study the researcher incorporated the following primary features of naturalistic inquiry as delineated by Owens (1987), which emphasized (1) direct contact between the investigator and the actors in data collection in the field; (2) not having a preordinate research design but allowing it to emerge as the study progressed; (3) the development of categories, once the data were collected, from examination of the data themselves; and (4) findings specific to the universe bounded by the study and not generalized (p. 181).

The nature of the research questions lent itself to the historical organizational case study approach, which, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), focuses upon the development of a particular organization over time. This research approach was selected in that it "allows for a level of understanding and explanation not possible through conventional experimental or survey designs" (Merriam, 1985, p. 204). Bogdan and Biklen define a case study "as a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event" (p. 58). They employ a funnel metaphor to describe the case study method. The large end of the funnel represents "the broad exploratory beginnings" and as the study progresses it moves to the narrow end, which is analogous to "more directed data collection and analysis" (p. 59). The advantage of this approach, states Merriam, is that

> the case study offers a framework for investigating complex social units containing multiple variables. Grounded in a real life context, the case study as a holistic, life-like account offers insight and illuminates meanings that expand the experiences of its readers. (p. 210)

Organizational reality is a combination of the organization's history, individual perceptions, and current circumstances. The task of the researcher is to acquire a dynamic perspective of the organization which is a successful interpretation of participants' understanding of their culture (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 10). Therefore, the research methodology which the researcher considered most appropriate was the historical organizational case study approach. Further, the study was guided by the methods of naturalistic, qualitative inquiry within the interpretive paradigm.

Method of Data Collection

The section that follows describes how the researcher gained access to the research site, a pilot interview and member check, and the process of data collection which included interviews, observation, and documentation. The various data sources were cross-checked against each other in order to ascertain the trustworthiness of the data.

Gaining Official Entry

The researcher had two possible sites in mind. The first choice, which was the site of Olds College, was preferred because of its size, location, and reputation in the college network of having an improved image over the last several years. The president of Olds College and the researcher had met professionally a few times and on one occasion had been team members of an external review group which had evaluated a college in British Columbia. Other than the president and three people with whom the researcher had a professional relationship in his former capacity as Dean of Students at another Alberta college, all other members of Olds College were unknown. The investigator had been to Olds College once prior to this case study to conduct an orientation activity. President Cornish was contacted by telephone in early October, 1988, at which time the researcher received encouragement and the suggestion that he write requesting formal Board approval to conduct research, which was subsequently granted (see Appendix 1).

In preparation for data collection in the field, the researcher prepared a draft interview guide which was used in a pilot interview with the chief executive officer of a local higher education institution. Notes taken from the interview were analyzed and subsequently shared with the president interviewed as a member check. As a result of this interview, the questions were revised in readiness for the first visit to the site.

In late October, 1988, the researcher, heeding the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (1982) to "ease yourself into the field" (p. 127) and to keep the first day's visit short, visited Olds College for an afternoon, where he was received by the vice-president and given a grand tour of the college. The tour was extensive and involved driving and walking around college facilities. The researcher was introduced to the administrative office staff and had a one-and-one-half-hour orientation interview with the vice-president. The spirit of cooperation and helpfulness of the first day extended to the researcher by the people of Olds College continued through the duration of the study.

Access to the site was further facilitated by a fortuitous meeting with the president, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mayor of the town of Olds, and a city counsellor, all of whom were in Edmonton to discuss the progress of the Aqua Leisure Centre proposal, a joint town/gown venture, with the Minister. At this time the president invited the researcher to attend an administrative retreat at Spring Lake the following day, where the researcher had the opportunity, in an informal setting, to meet approximately 25 administrators and middle managers. The process of entry was smooth and gradual.

Process of Data Collection

The data were collected over a period of five months beginning in October 1988 and concluding in February 1989. The primary data source was interviews, augmented by observation and documentation. Saran (1985) advocates the use of more than one approach to data gathering and refers to the mixture as "methodological pluralism" (p. 207). Observations and informal interview notes were kept as fieldnotes, and reflections and insights were recorded in a journal.

Interview Method

The semi-structured interview was the major data-gathering technique. The questions for the interviews were originally developed from the research questions, the literature, and the interview guides used by Alpern (1986) in his study of cultural change in an inner-city high school. An interview guide was developed which provided the basis for the interview (see Appendix 2). As the study progressed, questions were modified to address the emerging categories. The atmosphere of the interviews was informal and freeflowing. A modified progressive nomination technique was used whereby informants were asked to identify other potential informants who might or might not share their views but would have experience and opinions relative to the questions which were asked. Towards the end of the study the researcher, realizing that there were no students and few faculty among those interviewed, asked informants to identify individuals who might contribute to the study. Twenty-five formal interviews were conducted of one to two hours' duration, the average being just over one hour. Interviewees were informed that the interview would be kept confidential unless they gave their permission to release the information. Most informants were not concerned and felt that confidentiality was unnecessary.

Two of the 25 interviews were group interviews, one of two participants and the other of three. Blumer (1969) urges researchers to seek participants who are "acute observers and who are well informed." He advises further to identify a small number of informants so that they could be interviewed together as a resource group, which he believes is "more valuable than a representative sample" (p. 41).

Most of the formal interviews were conducted in the office of the informants or in an adjacent conference room. Two interviews were held in an office assigned to the researcher, and one took place in a restaurant. All interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed by a professional typist. The formal, taped interviews generated more than 1,300 typed pages (triple spaced). The transcriptions were edited and returned with a thank you note to the informants so that the transcriptions could be checked for accuracy (see Appendix 3). All transcriptions were coded in order to preserve anonymity.

Observation

While in the field the researcher lived in the student residence and was therefore totally immersed in campus life. There were many opportunities to observe the day-to-day activities of staff and students and to get a "real feel" for the campus climate. The researcher participated in some staff social activities and student gatherings. Most meals were taken in the college cafeteria, which was a rich area for observation.

Observations, informal interviews, and casual conversations were recorded in a fieldnote journal. In addition, a journal was kept in which the researcher entered his insights, reflections, and musings through the data collection and data analysis period.

Documents

Documents were the major source of referential adequacy materials in this study. Various college publications, brochures, newsletters, minutes, and copies of different collective agreements were collected by the researcher. The mission statement was of particular value, as were the marketing materials. Photographs were also obtained and taken to enhance the interpretation of the data.

Use of Photographs

Photographs have been used in the research report to round out the data and assist in reaching one of the goals of qualitative research, which is to "take the reader there" (Owens, 1982, p. 9). According to Fang (1985), "photography is another method of data collection and should be treated as such" (p. 10). She states further that the camera is the instrument of data collection and that the photographs serve as a visual source of data. In fact, Fang posits that photographs can be used as a method of triangulation.

Most of the reservations concerning the use of photography in qualitative research relate to the potential intrusiveness of the camera and the photographer (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Similarly, Dickie (1983) addressed the problem of "the potential influence on rapport" (p. 70). The photographs in this research report were unobtrusive and did not directly involve participants in the study; therefore, the data were unaffected. The only photograph which involved a participant in the study was taken by a journalist for the local newspaper.

Data Analysis

In the following section the theory of data analysis and the process of data analysis employed by the researcher are discussed. The work of Bogdan and Biklen (1982) provided the major influence in data collection and analysis.

The Theory of Data Analysis

The literature related to case studies is limited in providing guidelines for "analyzing, coding, and interpreting data, perhaps because the process is, by its very nature, idiosyncratic" (Merriam, 1985, p. 213). Nevertheless, the researcher was guided by the writings of Berg (1988), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Glaser and Strauss (1967), Guba and Lincoln (1982), Owens (1987), Spradley (1979), and Turner (1981).

Data analysis normally is most intensive towards the final stages of inquiry, although data analysis is ongoing from the outset (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 56). The researcher began data analysis through the first interview, albeit very cursorily. The following 13 guidelines offered by Bogdan and Biklen heavily influenced the course of this study:

1. Make decisions that narrow the study.
2. Decide on the type of study to be conducted.
3. Develop analytic questions.
4. Let what is found in previous observations direct data collection.
5. Record early interpretations in the form of "observer comment" (O.C.).
6. Write reflective notes about what is being learnt.
7. Try out ideas and themes on informants.
8. Begin exploring literature while in the field.

9. Experiment with metaphors, analogies, and concepts.
10. Do not be afraid to speculate.
11. Beware of venting, or reducing the energy normally assigned to writing by prematurely discussing the findings with others.
12. Develop coding categories.
13. Set content codes for each category (pp. 146-157).

While this study did not use the "pure" grounded theory approach, the methods of data analysis of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Turner (1981) provided useful insights for the researcher in analyzing interview data and fieldnotes. Turner outlines the nine stages of data analysis as follows: (1) develop categories, (2) saturate categories, (3) abstract definitions, (4) use the definitions, (5) exploit the categories fully, (6) note and develop follow-up links between categories, (7) consider the conditions under which the links hold, (8) make connections where relevant to existing theory, and (9) use extreme comparisons to the maximum to test emerging relationships. The researcher, with Turner, had difficulty applying the ninth stage (p. 241).

The Process of Data Analysis

Each interview was numbered and was reviewed in a preliminary way while editing for informant verification. The purpose of the first superficial analysis was to provide a glimmer as to possible codes and potential categories. Once the main group of interviews had been transcribed and verified by informants, the researcher began the task of coding phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Codes gave way to emergent categories, and new categories were created where concepts did not fit into established categories. Upon completion of the first phase of analysis, a large number of coding categories (101) had been identified. These were reduced substantially (46) on a second pass through the data. Throughout the process of data analysis, a set of index cards was kept, upon which the researcher recorded insights and possible linkages. Fieldnotes, portions of the journal, and other documentation were reviewed for possible new categories and concepts which could augment the coding process.

In preparation for cutting the units of data for placement in manila folders (46), the researcher made a third pass through the data to verify the coding, particularly the initial phase, since the coding was less sophisticated and the coding had become more refined as the researcher became more familiar with the data and the categories. The primary purpose of this third review was to assign a three-number grouping to each unit of data so it could be referred to the original context in the transcript for future analysis and reporting. The first number recorded the interview, the second was the transcript page number, and the third number represented the data unit number. A master copy was made of all coding and numbering which was retained for reference in reporting. The data units were then cut and placed into the labelled manila folders.

The folders were carefully reviewed and reworked until, as a result of linkages and what Bogdan and Biklen (1982) refer to as "common trusts," 15 major and minor themes emerged (p. 174). Diagrams, lists, and charts were used to connect the themes in a coherent and meaningful way.

The entire process of data collection, analysis, coding, and classification of the data lasted approximately eight months. Analysis continued into the research report-writing phase. Some thematic categories were broken up and parts discarded, and others were melded with subthemes and themes. The duration of the report-writing period was three-and-one-half months.

Research Trustworthiness

The establishment of trust in the findings of naturalistic inquiry is predicated upon "meeting tests of rigor" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 103). Owens (1982), in a discussion of the adequacy of naturalistic research design and execution, states that trustworthiness includes "plausibility, consistency, interconnectedness, and accurate detail--in short, validity" (p. 17). The main concern of researchers in qualitative studies is that the data are comprehensive and accurate, observe Bogdan and Biklen (1982), who state, "Qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations" (p. 44). This researcher was guided by the work of the abovementioned authors in reference to the rigor of this research study. Guba and Lincoln propose three concepts concerning the trustworthiness of the data: credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The central question for the naturalistic researcher is, "Do the data sources (most often humans) find the inquirer's analysis, formulation, and interpretations to be credible (believable)?" (Guba & Lincon, 1982, p. 246).

Member checks. Throughout the study the researcher verified the data and checked interpretations with informants, a process Guba and Lincoln refer to as "member checks" (p. 247). The ultimate member check was the submission of The Story of Olds to the president and vice-president for their view of the accuracy of the informants' interpretation.

Peer debriefing. In addition to member checks, Guba and Lincoln (1982) advocate the practice of peer debriefing as a technique to safeguard against the loss of credibility. The researcher and his supervisor met to discuss the progress of the research and potential problems. As well, the researcher worked closely with a classmate through the data collection and analysis phases of the study, and insights, techniques, and feelings were mutually shared. In fact, in the initial stages of data analysis an interview transcript was exchanged so that coding techniques and results could be compared.

Triangulation. The multiple data-gathering techniques of observation, referential adequacy materials, which included photographs, and interviews contributed to the process of triangulation. Further, as data emerged from the interview they were cross-checked with those of previous interviews and other information. Within interviews, informants were asked to elaborate or to give additional examples, which acted as a form of internal triangulation.

Referential adequacy materials. Interpretations were tested against a variety of materials which were collected from the site. These included newsletters, brochures, collective agreements, photographs, the mission statement, marketing material, the college directory and organization chart, and other college publications. Owens (1987) notes that these materials can assist in maintaining a "sense of context" over a period of time and therefore help the researcher in recalling events (p. 189).

Dependability

Audit trail. The purpose of the audit trail is to provide stability of the research, as the emergent design precludes an exact replication of the study. Owens (1987) comments that the aim of the audit trail is to leave enough evidence so that someone external to the research could attest to the appropriateness of the process and the results of the study. All documents, journals (fieldnotes and personal), rough sketches, and interview, coding, and other materials relating to the study have been dated and retained.

Confirmability

Practicing reflexivity. In addition to triangulation of data sources and methods used in the context of credibility, practicing reflexivity is intended to contribute toward the confirmation of interpretations. While in the field and between visits to the site, the researcher kept a journal in which were recorded insights, emerging interpretations, assumptions, and attitudes and, further, he tried to control for potential biases or preconceptions. However, Guba and Lincoln (1982) warn researchers that "no one set of procedures . . . represents prescriptions for how inquiry must be done. Rather, any group of procedures represents merely a set of guidelines that may facilitate the development of this new mode of inquiry" (p. 249). The researcher was conscious throughout the different phases of this inquiry of the need for rigor.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research methodology which included the theoretical orientation of the study, the process of data collection and analysis, and methods that were used to establish the trustworthiness of the research. The discussion included a description of the case study methodology and of qualitative inquiry.

Chapter 4

The Story of Olds College

As indicated earlier, the study addressed the main question which guided the study: What strategies does the leadership in a college use to manage the organization? And, in addition, the following subsidiary questions gave direction to the research:

1. Who are the college leaders, and what constitutes the college's leadership?
2. Which incidents are most critical in changing the college?
3. What strategies are used by college leaders?
   (a) What adaptive strategies are used?
   (b) What interpretive strategies are used?
4. What are the important factors in "managing" the college?
5. How do the various elements interact to produce organizational change?

Introduction

"The Story of Olds College" is an interpretation of the college's development from its inception in 1911 until 1989. The story begins with a description of the antecedent conditions to the current president's appointment in 1982, since they provided the context with which he had to contend. The main focus of this case study includes subsequent major changes, critical incidents, environmental forces, leadership strategies, and other factors as interpreted by college personnel through interviews. Readers are reminded that The Story of Olds College is a collection of perceptions of how some of the people of the college viewed circumstances, conditions, events, and each other. In contrast to the first 65 years, for which documents have been the prime resource, the "Clean-Up" President Era of 1978 to 1982, and subsequent chapters in this history have been reported based on the perceptions and memories of college personnel gathered through interviews, with some supporting documentation. Adaptation affects people and their activities, which the following chapters attempt to show through a close look at the effect of adaptive and interpretive decisions on people. The story spans six chapters and describes the leadership strategies and their effects, taking into consideration the organization, its culture, and its rapidly changing environment.

Chapter 4 briefly describes the history of Olds College from the establishment of the original demonstration farm in 1911 under the administration of the Department of Agriculture, through to the transfer of the college to the Department of Advanced Education in 1971, to an autonomous local board in 1978, concluding with a description of the college under the former president until 1982.

Chapter 5 outlines elements in the environment at the time of the appointment of the current president in 1982 and includes such factors as location and geography, weather, economics, technology, politics and government, external agencies, recruitment, and town-gown relationships.

Chapter 6 explores the president's leadership style and how a mandate for the college was developed. It includes a description of the president's philosophy, approach, and his mentoring role. Further, this chapter describes the college's mandate and subsequent marketing challenge, the external and internal leadership, consultation and organizational learning, the value of the connections with industry, and concludes with a discussion of the quality of instructional support at Olds College.

Chapter 7 focuses upon instructional delivery, which involves academic leadership and the importance of extension services.

Chapter 8 investigates issues which have resulted from change, such as training versus education, burnout, and administration-staff relationships.

Chapter 9 describes the culture of the college and town and their improved relationships. The chapter identifies some elements of the college's culture, concludes with a description of the present, and discusses a view of the future.

And now returning to Chapter 4, whose purpose is to trace significant historical developments which shaped agricultural schools generally in Alberta and, more specifically, the major environmental forces which affected Olds College. These historical events have been woven into the fabric of the college's tradition and culture.

The Story of Olds College opens in 1911 with the establishment of the Demonstration Farm, which marks the beginning of a long relationship with the Department of Agriculture. The fortunes of Olds College sagged through the fifties but picked up again in the sixties. The administrative control of the college moved from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Advanced Education in 1971, which ended a long relationship. The college began a new era in 1978 when it became board governed. The first chapter of The Olds College Story concludes with the appointment of a president by the new board and his tenure which ended in 1982.

The Ground Is Broken

On June 9, 1911, the Olds Demonstration Farm, the site of the present Olds College, was purchased by the Crown from Augustus Meredith Nanton for the sum of $4,200. The land is located in South-Central Alberta, 50 miles north of Calgary. The title of the quarter section was subsequently registered under the administration of the Alberta Department of Agriculture (Godwin, 1989). This land was one of seven properties selected from different locations which represented, as closely as possible, the differing soil, climate, and rainfall conditions across the province (Swindlehurst, 1964). According to the Honourable Duncan Marshall, the Minister of Agriculture in the Liberal Cabinet and representative of the Olds constituency, these farms were established on the mixed farming principle, therefore reflecting the practice of "well-to-do farmers of the province" which included "on each farm a herd of dairy cows, a number of hogs, sheep and poultry" (p. 8). Beef cattle were also an important feature on the farms. Swindlehurst emphasizes, "There is little doubt that the farms were intended as forerunners of the schools" (p. 8). The Honourable Duncan Marshall was reported to have declared in a speech to the Legislative Assembly in December 1911 that "an agricultural school without a farm would be of no value, and a farm without a school would not be as much value" (p. 8). In 1912 a school building was erected at Olds, and in the fall of 1913, Olds School of Agriculture and Home Economics received its first class. Birdsall (1975) and Swindlehurst note that with the exception of Claresholm, the seven demonstration farms were located in Cabinet Ministers' constituencies.

The purpose of the schools of agriculture was, through the provision of state-of-the-art agricultural methods, to train farm boys and girls in agriculture and home economics, respectively. Ultimately, the schools were intended to increase the province's productivity in agriculture and to encourage young people to return to the farm (Berghofer & Vladicka, 1980). Birdsall (1975), Olds College Principal from 1952 to 1972 and author of The Sixth Decade: At the Alberta Agricultural Colleges, observes, "Occupational experience was a built-in feature of agriculture and home-making education. In most cases students had experience before they came and returned to farms where they applied what they had learned" (p. 4).

However, early environmental influences continued to shape the direction of the new schools of agriculture. In 1912, Dr. Henry Marshall Tory, President of the new University of Alberta, and A. Bramley Moore, Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly, visited Denmark's Folk Schools and recommended the integration of some of the Danish rural educational methodology into a unique approach in agricultural training for Alberta. Duncan Marshall was heavily influenced by Professor Pritchard of the Carnegie Foundation, an eminent authority on technical education in North America, who advised against emulating the Ontario Agricultural College model since few graduates were returning to the farm in the Ontario experience, a stated objective of the early political leaders in Alberta. Dr. Pritchard recommended modelling the approach of the University of Wisconsin and other universities in the United States, namely, the establishment of agricultural high schools. Marshall rejected the high school concept in favor of a set of short courses leading to a two-year diploma course in practical agriculture.

The Olds School was the only agricultural school in Alberta which has operated continuously since 1913, although regular courses were suspended in 1918-1919 because the facility became a hospital during the Spanish influenza epidemic. The vagaries of politics, drought, and location were responsible for the closure of all but the Vermilion and Olds Schools. Fairview was opened in 1951 as a concession by the government in response to pressure for greater recognition of the Peace River country. Fairview suffered a major fire in 1958 and reopened in 1960. Vermilion experienced several interruptions as a result of war and depression. Berghofer and Vladicka (1980) report a drop in enrollment at Alberta's agricultural schools "from 365 in 1938 to a low of 166 in 1942" (p. 17).

In addition to the environmental forces outlined above, Birdsall (1975) highlights a recurring jurisdictional dispute as to which government department should administer the schools. The Conservative opposition held that agriculture should be taught in regular schools, but if special schools were to be developed, then the agricultural schools should be under the direction of the Department of Education rather than the Department of Agriculture. The issue persisted until 1971, at which time the newly formed Conservative government placed the schools under the aegis of the fledgling Department of Advanced Education. Birdsall credits the Department of Agriculture with the capable administration of these unique institutions, which met the needs of rural Alberta from 1913 to the early sixties. W. J. Elliott, a graduate of Guelph Agricultural College, was the first (1913-1919) of a succession of very competent and committed principals who, through the history of Olds College, led well qualified and dedicated staffs. In the forties some minor changes were made to the academic structure, but generally program offerings and administration remained unchanged until 1963.

With the exception of the year when it served as a hospital, Olds School flourished as an agricultural institution from 1913 through to the forties. J. E. Birdsall (1975) describes the dominant philosophy of the school as "paternalistic and altruistic" (p. 4) and "very authoritarian" (p. 99). He attributes this attitude to "several factors such as government policy, parental expectations, mores of the times, and characteristics of those who were responsible for administration" (p. 99). This philosophy, while severe and unacceptable from a contemporary perspective, was, in Birdsall's words, "reasonably appropriate" for the college's first 50 years, as it reflected the attitudes and values of the culture of rural Alberta through this period (p. 99). Paradoxically, Swindlehurst (1964) and Birdsall also report the compassion, warmth, and understanding the college staff had for their students. Birdsall recounts a futuristic and holistic approach to the student, though inherent, which addressed, in addition to the educational needs of students, the physical and emotional ills through the resident nurse, while physical education, sports, citizenship, and social functions were led by other staff. The students' spiritual needs were addressed, as they were strongly encouraged to attend church, sometimes at the Olds School itself. The ethos and values of the college were reflective of those of rural Alberta through these early years. Student participation in the learning experience was the norm. Among their many activities were, according to Birdsall,

> judging animals, butchering, meat cutting, judging grain, identifying weeds and weed seeds, building structures, classifying soils, making garments, preparing and serving meals, acting as hostesses, as guests at a meal, giving first aid, not to mention all the social and other out-of-class activities. (p. 4)

Skills they gained were quickly put to use when the "boys and girls," as the students were referred to then, returned to the farm. An indication of how deeply the authoritarian, paternalistic philosophy was entrenched in the system was that the serious-minded veterans of World War II who attended the school did not influence a change in the regulations which were made for boys and girls, although, as observed by Birdsall, there was no doubt that administrators turned a blind eye to many of the activities in which the veterans engaged, provided they exercised discretion.

By way of an example of environmental forces with which college officials had to contend, an Olds graduate recounted in the early days "the two things that were never tolerated at Olds were liquor and laziness" (Swindlehurst, 1964, pp. 52-53). Government policy was clear in reference to "demon alcohol" and posed a serious threat to students and administrators--an alcohol-related offense was punishable by suspension or expulsion. It was not unusual for political pressure to be applied to principals who, in handling liquor infractions, risked their jobs if they deviated from the strict policy. In fact, Birdsall (1975) reports an incident where the Minister and the Premier intervened in a situation which involved six students who received a suspension for violating the liquor policy just before the Christmas exams. Mothers of two of the suspended boys appealed to the Premier, who overruled the principal's decision, placing the local administration in an untenable position, particularly since the strict alcohol policy originated with the government. Birdsall recollects further that two principals' resignations were precipitated by their actions in connection with liquor-related incidents. The alcohol regulations remained unchanged until the early nineteen sixties, when the policy became less rigorous and more in keeping with the social environment of rural Alberta. It is important to note that many levels of authority had to be included in alcohol policy change, demonstrating the lack of autonomy accorded to the colleges. In reference to the alcohol policy, a substantial change in the discretionary powers of the principals occurred only after the consideration of the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Director of Extension and Colleges, the Director of Agricultural Colleges, the principals, and the Provincial Ombudsman (Birdsall, 1975). A major rethinking of alcohol policies occurred as a result of the age of majority being dropped from 21 to 18 years on March 31, 1971.

Autonomy at the college level was minimal compared to today's practice, as policies, resources, and programs were directly controlled by provincial departments in Edmonton, the province's capital city. To a large extent the college was buffeted by environmental forces over which its leaders had little control.

A Credibility Crisis

The reputation of the agricultural colleges began to sag in the late 1940s and was seriously called in question through the 1950s and early 1960s. The total enrollment of Fairview, Olds, and Vermilion Schools of Agriculture decreased from "close to 400 in 1953 to little over 200 in 1957" (Berghofer & Vladicka, 1980, p. 17). This crisis in agricultural education was a result of the inability of the colleges to adapt to the changing rural environment. More attractive opportunities for employment and education, urbanization, and high costs of establishing a farm due to escalating land and equipment prices discouraged rural youth from enrolling in the colleges. Swindlehurst (1964) reports a general trend towards "larger farms and fewer operators" and a "feeling of unrest" among rural youth due to a combination of "adverse farming conditions" and the lure of "petroleum and industrial development" (p. 113). Former students of the schools reflected nostalgically upon their college experience, but, through the 1950s, their children went elsewhere to college. Dennison and Gallagher (1986) referred to the fact that the agricultural colleges "suffered from uneven demand" through this period (p. 17).

The problem was exacerbated since college programs were outdated, using a vocational rather than a technical focus. This, coupled with low entrance requirements, meant that the students who did enroll were the less capable of those graduating from public school. Staff turnover was high, facilities were inadequate, and requests to the government for increases in salaries and program changes went unheeded. Berghofer and Vladicka (1980) state that at this period the per-student costs in the agricultural schools exceeded those at the university (p. 19). The foregoing conditions during the middle fifties prompted E. W. Hinman, the Provincial Treasurer, to protest, as he "openly condemned the schools as useless and stated that it would be cheaper to send our students to the United States to get agricultural education" (Birdsall, 1975, p. 5). In reaction to this lack of confidence, the Director of the Schools, the principals, support staff, alumni, and farm organizations rallied to support the schools and lobbied the government.

Through the middle fifties the viability and survival of the agricultural schools were severely threatened, yet this period of crisis was viewed by Birdsall (1975) as a time when "ideas for change developed"

(p. 5). It is interesting to note that approximately 30 years later the administration of Olds College would face a similar challenge to which it would have to adapt.

The Winds of Change

Yet conditions changed suddenly. In reference to the revival of activity at his "school," Olds Principal J. E. Birdsall was quoted as exclaiming in 1961, "It was just as though a log jam broke" (Swindlehurst, 1964, p. 117). Enrollments were up, a new dairy barn had been authorized, and the old agriculture building which had burned in a fire on January 31, 1960, was replaced by a new plant science building, which opened in April, 1961. Berghofer and Vladicka (1980) speculate that the Cameron Commission on Education may have influenced the government to upgrade agricultural education since it had "not kept pace with modern needs" (p. 28).

Olds School programs expanded in 1963 to include a wider range of vocational courses. The agriculture program was divided into General Agriculture and four majors to allow for specialization: Animal Science, Farm Mechanics, Plant Science, and Farm Management. The Home Economics program was discontinued, and Olds introduced "Clothing and Design" and "Commercial" courses. The Horticulture program, introduced in 1963-64, was the first program designed to serve the off-farm market. However, students were counselled with regard to which electives would be suitable for various agribusinesses. It was at this point that Olds Agricultural and Vocational College reached a major watershed: Instead of training young people exclusively for farmlife, the college began to respond to the demands of industry.

Additionally, the Honourable H. E. Strom, the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, on January 28, 1963, tabled with the Cabinet a brief which included many of the recommendations prepared by a sub-committee of the Board of Agricultural Education. The resulting legislation was responsible for the redevelopment of agricultural education in Alberta. In 1963 the name change to Alberta Agricultural and Vocational Colleges (italics added), which became official in 1967, symbolized the new direction. Enrollments in the schools soared from a low of 238 in 1957 to a new high of 590 in 1965 as a consequence of improvements in programs.

However, government activity in Edmonton continued to influence the agricultural colleges. On May 7, 1969, the Colleges Act was passed which recommended that the agricultural colleges, along with public colleges and technical institutes, become an Alberta Colleges system. While still under the direct administration of the Department of Agriculture, the agricultural colleges were clearly moving towards membership in the college system, which had some attractions. The colleges were outside the civil service, and therefore decisions would be made more quickly; further, the salaries of college instructors were more closely aligned with university professors', while agricultural college instructors' salaries were closer to high school teachers' salaries.

Programs had to expand and enrollments, which had fallen slightly to 540 in 1967, increased to 650 by 1971. The vibrant colleges were viewed by some to have a tarnished image, since the "vocational" high schools carried a stigma. The vocational high schools had lower prestige because they typically had attracted students who were not academically successful. Therefore, in 1970 "agricultural and vocational" was symbolically dropped from the college names, and Olds College received the name it carries today. Paradoxically, the inclusion of Olds College in the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference "did more for the public image of the College than improved programs" (Birdsall, 1975, p. 12).

Olds College experienced a major change when the 36-year-old Social Credit government was defeated by Peter Lougheed's Conservatives in August, 1971, and in September, 1971, the colleges were placed under the jurisdiction of the newly created Department of Advanced Education. The agricultural colleges maintained a different but nevertheless head office and branch offices relationship with the Provincial Government in Edmonton, since services such as accounting and personnel were administered from the appropriate divisions in the Department of Advanced Education. A modified civil service bureaucracy prevailed, although the principals did have direct access to the Deputy Minister (Birdsall, 1975). Olds College did not have an infrastructure, which had been built into the public colleges under the Department of Advanced Education. The full significance of this deficit did not have much impact on Olds College until April 1, 1978, when the college came under public control and therefore became "full members of Alberta's public college system" (Berghofer & Vladicka, 1980).

The Influence of External Relations

Throughout the history of Olds College, external relations with the people and the organization's surrounding environment have contributed to its rich traditions and challenges.

The establishment of Olds College near the town of Olds has, over the years, been largely of mutual benefit to both college and town. The infusion of human and material resources from the college has helped keep the town dynamic and progressive, while the goods and services provided by the town have been beneficial to the college. Nevertheless, town-gown tension has occurred periodically, usually based on "small irritations," as observed by Birdsall (1975),

> such as supplying invoices in quadruplicate to the college, being visited by college students soliciting advertising for their yearbook, or finding that large purchases by the college go to wholesalers in the city [which] cool the ardor of some local businessmen. This is nothing compared to the disillusionment of the local swain whose girl friend leaves him for a college student! (pp. 59-60)

These, among other sources of conflict, have affected the quality of the relationship between the college and the town of Olds over the years.

Since its establishment, Olds College has had an informal relationship with agriculturally related businesses such as implement dealers and grain companies, among many others. A critical breakthrough occurred in 1963 when, in response to the demands of the horticultural industry, Olds College introduced "Horticulture," the first program designed specifically to meet the requirements of an industry. The program was spearheaded by the Alberta Horticultural Advisory Committee in 1960. This marked an auspicious beginning of the vital relationship between college programs and industry through the vehicle of the Advisory Committee. In the words of Mr. Buck Godwin, pioneer horticulturist at Olds College, "As far as I'm concerned, the credit goes to industry. . . . When you build a program that is industry requested, industry guided, those were the great days of the colleges." In 1967 the program name changed to "Horticultural Technology," to which "Commercial Floriculture" was added in 1973. These events opened the floodgates to the formation of many other advisory committees and technology programs, moving the college beyond strictly training for farm and ranch production.

Over the years the administration was presented with some special challenges. Programs proliferated at Olds College in the early 1970s, resulting in specialized faculty, organized into divisions, led by senior instructors. Whenever the principal could make the case to "head office administration," senior instructors who had taken on additional administrative loads were awarded extra remuneration. The full-time administration at Olds College in 1970, excluding the principal and including secretaries, clerks, and other office workers, totalled 11. Personnel, purchasing, accounting, and other support functions which normally make up the infrastructure of an organization were administered from Edmonton. In 1967 the responsibility for maintenance, except caretaking, had been shifted from the direct control of the principal to the Department of Public Works. Therefore, patience and liaison skills were important, since the civil service bureaucracy provided special challenges. Birdsall (1975) recollects, "Because of the slowness of government workings, it was exasperating at times for those involved, whether as senior administrators or the people most affected by the changes" (p. 36). This frustration generated some creativity, as an instructor relates in this much-told episode which poked fun at the bureaucrats who had control but were unaware of what was happening in the field:

> We had to go to Edmonton. I can remember waiting for approval for a little seventeen-dollar hotplate, and I don't know whether [a faculty member] told you the story of the "thermodine": It wasn't approved, so we just changed the name and called it a "thermodine" and got it, and we had to quibble over a seventeen-dollar item!

However, fluctuations in the efficiency of the government bureaus were not necessarily the fault of those at the lower levels. The abilities of the political and appointed heads of the Department of Agriculture affected the fortunes of the colleges. A weak Minister is "unable to carry the ball" of his department in Cabinet, and a weak Deputy "is usually a millstone around the neck of his department and his Minister" (Birdsall, 1975, p. 41). Considering the frequent turnover of senior officials and the potential for incompatibility between them, it is not surprising that the colleges experienced varying levels of support from Edmonton.

In addition to the provincial Departments of Agriculture, Public Works, Advanced Education, and Education, the Board of Agricultural Education, the Board of Post-Secondary Education, and the short-lived intermediary body, the Alberta Colleges Commission (1969-71), mediated between various interest groups and advised government on policy, which ultimately affected the destiny of the colleges.

Other external factors which have important significance to the development of the agricultural colleges have been their alumni associations, 4-H groups, the various federal government departments, public colleges, universities, and farm organizations, among others. Clearly the colleges were not completely closed systems unaffected by the environment. As the colleges developed they became less branch-office operations and were more open to their respective environments. However, the civil-service tradition and long affiliation with the Department of Agriculture had insulated the staffs and gave cause to one staff member to refer to the period from the 1960s to the early 1980s as "a lingering Good Old Boy Era." A fraternal club atmosphere prevailed where, within the protection of the bureaucracy and the relationships which had been developed over the years, faculty life was very comfortable.

The transition from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Advanced Education in 1971 as a consequence of the new Conservative government policy suddenly moved the colleges from a technically oriented agricultural focus to a pedagogically oriented educational focus. What the staff heard, according to one instructor who experienced the transition, was: "Hey, we don't know anything about agriculture, but we sure's hell know something about teaching, and we sure know something about education and educational trends, and you guys are going to have to pick up some of this stuff." Professional development in pedagogy received high priority, and workshops such as Instructional Techniques, Testing and Evaluation, and Use of Audio-Visual Aids were conducted at the college. The period between 1971 and 1978 was a maintenance phase, as the future of Olds College in the college system was uncertain. Some observers felt, perhaps harshly, that the college rested on "past laurels" until the early 1980s.

Clearly the most significant environmental force which influenced the development of Olds College was the government and its respective departments. Dennison and Gallagher (1986) state, "In the final analysis, the colleges are instruments of governments which have created and supported them" (p. 194). The decision of the newly elected Conservative government to give Olds College local autonomy under the control of a Board of Governors on April 1, 1978, severed a 65-year connection with direct control by government departments. Perceiving a critical incident in the history of the college, one informant, reflecting on this period of 1978 to 1982, summarizes the feeling of many:

> When Advanced Education left us--and I kind of like to use that: They left us kind of high and dry, and there was very little infrastructure, very little support system within the college, and we were scrambling for a number of years to get those processes, those systems, in place, and, you know, made quite a few mistakes in doing it, and I'm talking generally, whether our financial system, or whether it was our instructional evaluation system, or whether it was our physical plant maintenance plan, or whatever.

The major decisions had been made in Edmonton. In many ways Edmonton was the link between very autonomous departments which were isolated in various buildings across campus. For example, budgeting was difficult, as an instructor recollects:

> We had to know what things cost to run, and Advanced Education couldn't tell us. Advanced Education had no idea how much residence rooms really cost. None. I remember one of the very first things that they said after the year of running the residence and finding out that the costs were way above what was being charged. We were given the dictate to get it under control. That was an interesting thing. Just what's it cost to heat the buildings, to run the plants, when all of this is done in bits and pieces through the machinery of Advanced Education? And really, we started with no idea. What was it really going to cost? . . . So the accountants were busy that year.

There was confusion when the new, inexperienced Board of Governors appointed their first president.

The "Clean-Up" President Era - 1978-1982

College personnel were not prepared for the autonomy which had been thrust upon them. Over the years they had comfortably adapted to government bureaucracy. Over the six-and-one-half decades under the jurisdiction of the civil service, a staff member declared, in describing the legacy with which the new Board had to cope:

> the systems and procedures get pretty entrenched under kind of a distant administration, if you want. I mean, you had a man on campus running things, but a lot of the money and decisions were coming out of Edmonton, and that allowed some things to develop that had to change when we went to a Board like that, as a public college,

Another stated,

> We had a whole bunch of groups on campus that became really isolationist, and we had a department that was in unto itself, and they did only what was good for them. It was almost like they wanted to run this area without regard for anyone else.

The Board inherited a very difficult situation requiring strong leadership, which they found in a man from Ontario. The new president was a man of action with a particular management style who is remembered by one instructor as "very cold, very distant, very authoritarian." He was referred to as a "model of administrator that probably was prominent in the forties." Some respondents found his administrative style to be "authoritarian" and "dictatorial" and felt staff were rarely consulted. New programs arrived on campus, and with little discussion staff were told that they were to deliver them in two months. A senior manager's view of the former administration was

> one of a perception that says academics can't manage anything, and we need to put management structures in place that protect them from themselves. It was a management that didn't give the five Department Heads or the Dean control over their own finances.

The new president was seen by some informants as "heavy handed" and "wielded a pretty heavy stick." He fired a popular chairman of an established department, the consequences of which continue: "Yes, there was some blood on the walls, and there's still some blood on the walls; it hasn't all been mopped up yet. The vestiges are still apparent." "It was as if he killed their father," was the comment of one observer in likening the firing of the loved and respected department head to the assassination of a patriarch. This action taken by the "Clean-Up President" symbolically signalled the beginning of the end of the "Good Old Boys" era. He was reputed to be a "stirrer-upper" who "upset a lot of applecarts" and from many reports disturbed the relative status quo the college had enjoyed under the civil service. According to a few informants, the fact that he was an Easterner and did not mix with the townspeople conveyed to some that he was at Olds College only temporarily. He "created a kind of separation that made the community feel unwelcome at the college and put the college outside community activities and concerns."

People interviewed reported that he had no ties to the history of the college and had a narrow vision of agriculture. The president got what he wanted most of the time, except he could not obtain the mandate from Advanced Education for Olds College to be a more comprehensive college in the community. The Department saw Olds as being an agricultural college. A college member perceived that even if the president could have changed the organization, "the external environment wouldn't have let you be that way, because the competition geographically and economically was stacked against the place." Regardless, according to a number of informants, the president had run afoul of senior Department officials. In essence, the senior officials' reaction was alleged by one informant to have been, "We're going to teach you a lesson, boy, in how you do things in Alberta, [which is to] do things on the up and up." "The official just put his fist down and they didn't get nothing for a long time." Therefore, even though the late 1970s and early 1980s were prosperous times for Alberta and colleges were experiencing rapid expansion, an administrator speculated, "We couldn't get anywhere near the trough, and . . . the college suffered a little bit from capital and programmatic doldrums" as a consequence of the Department's orientation towards Olds's president.

The "Clean-Up President," as he was perceived, had a difficult task, and, upon reflection, a senior administrator remarked,

> But, you know, looking back on that now, it's easy to recognize that, with the history of this institution being what it is, or was, coming out of a hierarchical environment like a government department--two government departments, in fact, in sequence--that to expect a great degree of management skill 'a la team facilitation participation mode was likely an unfair expectation.

College members credit the president with beginning the development of a necessary infrastructure in the face of great adversity. He is remembered as a great supporter of the Equine Program, the person responsible for reviving the sheep herd, and the champion of other agricultural programs. He was the initiator of the Innovative Instruction Fund, an incentive fund developed from funds generated from various program activities. There was a commitment to sabbatical leaves and faculty development, where input from staff was encouraged.

Very dramatic changes were required, and it is unlikely a more democratic style would have been effective, as one interviewee remarked:

> It created a lot of upheaval, but he was the kind of person that you always knew where you stood, whether you liked it or not, but he did get some of the initial framework started and underway and made some of those changes.

There was a general feeling among the people interviewed that he was the right person for the right time, although it became apparent that it was time for him to leave: In the words of one respondent, "Nothing was happening under him. A tremendous amount of energy and that, but it was kind of like a pinball machine, and nobody knew what was happening and never knew what was going to be going on."

Many of the staff who were at the college through the period of 1978-1982 tell of the traumatic change from years of protection within the civil service to sudden autonomy. People had been dislodged from their past routines, and all were upset--"that transition period was really tough"--although most, upon reflection, recognized that, unless drastic measures were taken by the leadership, "we would have dug our heels in and just stayed." The president's dream of a rural comprehensive college with a broad programmatic base was not to be because the government would not fund non-agricultural courses at Olds.

At this time there was confusion as to what direction the college should take. Olds College was having difficulty going through what one informant described as a "very, very rapid [change], that mental process or cultural process of throwing themselves into gear, with competing with other institutions that had learned the ropes for how to get dollars." The college was closer to the "same track" they had been on since 1913--but the environment had changed substantially.

This chapter of The Story of Olds College traces some of the major events in its history since the college's inception in 1911 until 1982, the year in which the new president was appointed. The college had a tradition of service to agriculture exceeding 70 years. The shift from direct government control to local board autonomy in 1978 severed a 65-year affiliation and left the college in confusion. The "Clean-Up President" had begun to develop an infrastructure, but he was unsuccessful in establishing a comprehensive mandate for Olds College.

In 1982 Olds College's total staff complement was 231. Instructional and instructional support personnel totalled 87, and the total full-time equivalent student enrollment was approximately 975. These numbers have not changed significantly over the seven years to the time of writing.

The direction of the college was unclear in 1982, and the environment was changing rapidly. The following chapter describes the environment as interpreted by the people interviewed by the researcher. The new president had to face some major challenges from within and from outside the college.

Chapter 5

The Environment of Olds College - 1982

In addition to the history of Olds College, the new president had to contend with a rapidly changing environment, some of the forces of which continued throughout his tenure. In many ways the conditions at Olds College in 1982 were similar to those Birdsall (1975) reported 20 years earlier. The environment surrounding Olds College in 1982, at the time of appointment of the new president, Dan Cornish, was turbulent and very different from that for which the college was originally structured. President Cornish believes that the challenges presented by the environment are not unique to agriculture; in fact, "it's a whole challenge that faces our society, because everything you can say in a generic sense about agriculture fits in some way to other pieces of society: complex, uncertain, changing technology, rapidly developing knowledge."

Members of the college community who were interviewed identified some elements in the environment as major influences: geography, weather, technology, economics, government, politics, external agencies, and the recruitment of staff and students from the social environment. However, these factors rarely act singly but interact in complex combinations which are in constant flux.

Location and Geography

Olds is located 50 miles north of Calgary and 50 miles south of Red Deer in Mountainview country which is the center of a large, fertile farming region. The population, within a reasonable travelling distance, is rural, and agriculture and petroleum-related activity are the major occupations. Comprehensive community colleges in Calgary and Red Deer have broad mandates which, to a large extent, determined the mandate of Olds. It is unlikely that Olds College could compete as a comprehensive community college; therefore, the mandates of the other colleges restrict the scope of its programming.

Weather

Weather is important to any agriculturally related enterprise. Precipitation and temperatures are major determinants in the success of farming locally, nationally, and internationally. Success determines supply, which in turn reflects on prices. These fluctuations affect programming. For example, in times of drought farmers are interested in financial management, marketing, and management skills, yet production becomes the focus when money can be made. Programs must keep pace with shifting environments. According to one administrator, "Your clients are quite fickle: They're only there because you have what they want. As soon as you don't have what they want, they're no longer your clients." What happens in the agricultural environment in turn impacts on the college, as one informant observed:

> We're very much affected by agriculture and the fortunes of agriculture, up or down; we're very, very much affected by that. It affects our student enrolment. Industry's advice to us can be affected by what's happening in agriculture; it affects us economically.

Economics

President Cornish explained the extreme complexity of the farming equation. Input costs such as fuel and fertilizer prices are very unstable, and through various means, including technology, the idea is to reduce these input costs. The other side of the coin is to stabilize output prices, i.e., prices paid for commodities, so farmers can plan without huge peaks and valleys in cash flow in and out. He continues,

> What is very difficult in that whole equation is the way that governments world wide have played a role in trying to deal with some of those vagaries: subsidies, you know, the political-social pressures to maintain a rural economy, all kinds of action like that which has done quite a bit to distort the marketplace that's going on out there.

Rising costs of production and high interest rates combined with poor prices had caused many family farms to go under. Prospects for the future were not optimistic. Agriculture was getting a bad name. Young people were being discouraged from anything related to agriculture; consequently, enrollments in agricultural colleges across Canada were plummeting. According to one manager, the college's clients had the perception that "not only is agriculture not a necessary place to go. Olds College is primarily agricultural, therefore primarily farming; therefore Olds College is not necessarily the place to take your future." The college was facing an enrollment crisis on the basis of the agricultural economic environment.

Local, provincial, national, and international markets affect the farmer and agribusinessman and, therefore, what is taught at Olds College. By way of an illustration, since the early 1980s the general economy has declined; therefore, disposable income available for recreation related to horses has decreased, affecting the Equine Program. The fortunes of the sod farmer are tied to lawns, golf courses, and parks, which links with Horticulture, as does urban agriculture (indoor landscaping, atriums, etc.), which is dependent upon urban growth.

Activity in Fashions has become more and more centralized in Montreal and Toronto, which impacts the Fashion Merchandising program, as there are fewer opportunities for graduates in the West. The college has been involved in sheep production, for example, and the Canadian sheep industry is experiencing great difficulty competing with Australia and particularly New Zealand. As a result of advanced technology, subsidies, and trade agreements, it is cheaper to market fresh, chilled New Zealand lamb than local lamb. In reference to the general economy, many instructors from across the various program areas view the Canada-United States free trade agreement with some apprehension as to its implications for course delivery.

Technology

Instructors must be constantly aware of the rapidly changing industrial technology in order to keep their students au courant with developments in agriculture. The last decade has brought profound change in technology and practice in the agriculture industry. Formal consultative mechanisms were not in place to monitor technological change when Dan Cornish arrived at Olds College in 1982. As a result, some programs were out of touch. The establishment of linking structures will be discussed later; however, faculty credit the current administration with being, in the words of one instructor, "probably more open to new ideas than they have been in the past, and I think the reason is that they realize they have to be in order to keep in touch with technology."

A senior academic administrator indicates that instruction

> is quite different than the traditional I'll-teach-the-way-I-was-taught concept that we could get away with a hundred years ago, even 50 years ago; you can't get away with it any more. The content, the technical content, is changing so much.

Examples of this technology which was emerging in the early 1980s are computer-assisted drafting (CAD); tissue culture, which is transforming the horticulture industry; the Japanese have developed a computerized tractor which will change farm mechanics; the college's prototypical waste management system and methane digester; computerized feed handling; and computer-assisted business systems for farm application. College programs have had to adapt to technological changes in the agricultural industry in order to ensure that their graduates are competitive, and this was a major challenge facing the new president in 1982.

In addition, teaching methods were affected by technological advances. It is equally important for instructors to stay abreast of changing instructional technology. Faculty have reported increasing support and leadership by the administration in advancing modern instructional techniques. An illustrative case of instructional technology is that the artificial insemination process can be televised through a miniature T.V. camera in a sheep's uterus with a laparoscope. The butchering of game occurs once a year, and, through video, the process can be viewed close up without danger and be available throughout the year. Similarly, the life cycle of a weed can be recorded, and teaching is no longer restricted to the seasons. The college needed to adapt to changing content and instructional technology just to keep up.

Politics and Government

The history of Olds College is indicative of the powerful external influence of politics and government. The will of the people is expressed in government. As an administrator put it bluntly, "An institution which is non-responsive will not get government support. An institution which alienates itself from the people, i.e., students, will not get government support." Many of the major events in the college's evolution have been generated by the government, including the movement towards public board governance in 1978.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of having a president who is "politically acceptable." The former president was highly politically acceptable in Ontario but not so here. The approach is different. Very soon after his arrival Cornish, a native Albertan, went to work for the Conservative campaign in the Olds constituency, which had been a Social Credit dynasty for 15 years. The Conservative candidate was elected, and, according to one staff member, "that's when the capital money started rolling again." People have in part attributed the flow of capital money to the new president's political involvement and connections, as one informant observed:

> I have to give Cornish credit: He knew his way around Edmonton, and he got us capital building money like you won't believe. The one thing, when you're playing with Edmonton, those guys aren't going to make any more money, so it's a power game.

Around the time of the arrival of Cornish as president, the Alberta economy began to turn as a result of sinking world oil prices, which forced the government to reduce college funding. Restraint forced the college to do things differently. The effect was not entirely negative. Staff revealed that it forced them to renew contracts with industry to obtain equipment and "to get back in touch with reality a bit . . . more accountability to industry." "I had to consider alternatives," disclosed another mid-manager. A senior administrator believed that having to struggle has forced Extension back into the departments, which was a favorable trend. There was general agreement that restraint called for better planning. Within the last few years the government has encouraged diversification efforts away from a resource-dependent economy. One observer thinks the president has

> picked out some elements of the Conservative government philosophy, which is diversification, value-added kind of stuff, applied them to what the school does, has blended those arguments in very well, has put together a convincing argument for government, and has won a niche.

In addition to the provincial political effects on the college, the local mayor and town council can create a favorable environment which invites community participation in college affairs. Cooperation and approval of college activities is important at all levels of government.

External Agencies

Although an instrument of government, the Department of Advanced Education is at the top of the list of external agencies which shape Alberta colleges through capital funding and program approval. A staff member commented that through the years 1978 to 1983, Olds was seen to be "locked into a program base at a time when the whole system is growing, and if you didn't grow with it, it was like falling way behind." An exclusive agricultural program base was a liability in an oil and gas boom economy. And there is no doubt that the perception from within the college system was that Olds College was falling behind. Strategies used to extricate the college will be described in an upcoming section. More recently, Department programs of "rationalization," a euphemism for avoiding duplication and restricting growth, have become de rigueur. A frustrated staff member indicates that healthy colleges will design creative ways of circumventing intransigent bureaucracy: "What that [rationalization] encourages is, it encourages institutions to use Extension Departments to do things. Eventually, if an institution is healthy, it's going to find a way around that kind of knee-jerk leadership."

An aspect of funding mentioned earlier was the lack of sufficient resources to develop an adequate infrastructure when Olds College moved from the administration of the Departments of Agriculture and Advanced Education. Most public colleges received ample funds which were included in recurring annual base funding when they were established in the mid- to late 1960s. Olds College has been developing an effective infrastructure without special funding.

Another type of external agency is the professional societies, an example of which is the Alberta Society of Engineering Technologists (ASET), which certifies various programs. Certification teams visit the program and make recommendations on course and program improvement. In the case of ASET, one of their recommendations was that the program would have to get into computer-assisted drafting (CAD) or risk being decertified. The staff had requested CAD equipment in the past but had been unsuccessful through the college's capital budget process because there were other priorities. Pressure from the environment can be effective. One instructor reports:

> That pressure came from outside, and that's the kind of pressure that's the most useful. If it comes from within, unless the within happens to be the students, I don't think, if

> it's just a few instructors saying, "We need this," if it's a very, very costly item, it's tough to get, especially now with the government grants going down.

Unions and professional associations exert external pressure through collective bargaining and grievance procedures. Support staff reported that the Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE) guided them in particular directions, as one member related:

> But I still think that we here, ourselves, say, "Fine, this is Olds College; that's nice. But this is what our union membership wants; this is what _we_ want as a contract"; and that we can do it within that framework. In other words, use the union for what benefits they can give us, but not let them tell us what to do.

The union is perceived as quietly influencing, but over recent years, one member stated, "It's being turned more to what _we_ want, more reflective of what _we_ want." There is a sense that union representatives from Red Deer and Edmonton are at times interfering and are outsiders who really have no interest in Olds. An adminstrator used an effective metaphor in explaining how an external third party is occasionally useful in a community as close as Olds College:

> It's very hard to take a position and to speak out on behalf of something that you want without offending the man who lives next door to you and whose lawnmower you borrowed last summer. So sometimes an outsider will serve a purpose like that, but an insider can't.

A union representative can be assertive in articulating local interests and return to Red Deer without worrying whether or not he can borrow the lawnmower again. In contrast, the faculty are loosely associated with Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculty Association (ACIFA), a network which is designed primarily as an information resource for collective bargaining.

Although there are many other external influences, the only other agency of significance that interviewees mentioned was the Apprenticeship Branch. During the boom in Alberta the trades went through rapid expansion, and colleges, in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Branch, developed programs to support the oil patch. When the bust came along, the unused dollars earmarked for apprenticeship courses made up the necessary slack, which greatly assisted colleges during the slump. In 1982 Olds College did not have much slack. As mentioned earlier, the college was restricted to agricultural programs; therefore, it missed out, with the exception of some activity in Heavy Duty and Agricultural Mechanics. However, recently members of the Plant Science Department received program approval for a Landscape Gardener Apprentice program where students are trained for a couple of months and leave for employment.

Recruitment

The recruitment of staff and students and the town and rural culture were considered by many informants to be important aspects of the social environment which had drastically affected the organization. The appointments of the first president and President Cornish were considered by many to be "benchmark events" for the college. Each was selected by the Board for characteristics they could bring to improve Olds College. Subsequently, the president would hire people who reflected the skills and values he believed important for the organization. This will be discussed later in the context of Dan Cornish's leadership style.

The student population of the early 1980s was diverse and represented an early profile of the students seven years later. Students were becoming older and more serious minded with specific career goals in mind. Instructors report that they were beginning to teach students with post-secondary experience and even degrees. Although some incoming students were weak in basic academic skills, yet had excellent "hands on" skills, students were "more worldly," and many were married, requiring family accommodation in town as the residence had no amenities for children. More than two thirds of the students lived in residence or in town. Women were beginning to enroll in "non-traditional" programs. Many students came from farm backgrounds of varying degrees of technical sophistication. Programs such as Agriculture Mechanics have traditionally delayed starting up until the crops were off. The family was important, and it was not unusual for the Registrar to receive requests for grades or progress reports from interested parents. Occasionally students could not stand being away from home and, homesick, left the college. On the other hand, students from urban areas were showing an interest in agriculturally related careers. Traditional, paternalistic attitudes of some faculty were beginning to be challenged by the new, assertive students who, as an instructor had observed, "question what they're learning and how applicable it's going to be to them once they leave the campus. And if they feel that a course is not meeting their needs, then they're outspoken as a result." The trends mentioned above became the norm in the late 1980s.

Town-Gown

Some people interviewed referred to a kind of symbiotic relationship the town has had with the college over the years, since "what happens to the community affects the college, and what happens to the college affects the community." Nevertheless, the college is a community with its own culture which, from the perspective of a manager who lived in town, "exists independent of the community in some ways, but in others it's very tied in to the values and the beliefs and the culture of this area." At the time of Dan Cornish's arrival, the town-gown relationship was antagonistic. The former president had made overtures to the local Agricultural Society to cooperatively build an arena for the community's and the town's mutual benefit on college land. The deal fell through due to the mistrust which has existed for years. One community member stated, "For a long, long time the college was an oasis unto itself. 2A highway was this Maginot line that separated the community from the college. It's only under Cornish's leadership that that's begun to change."

A few college personnel explained the historical town-gown tension as animosity generated by the "townies'" perceiving the college people as "just sitting here doing nothing, government money, government run, you know, their money, taxpayers' money; they're doing absolutely nothing, and they're making this great wage." What is implied is that the townsfolk have had to face the harsh agricultural reality while college personnel have been protected. In 1982 this feeling was prevalent, and one employee who left a business to join the college reported his friends as saying, "Oh, you're going 'home' to work," referring to the college as a retirement home. A prominent local businessman was reputed to have said after a disappointing search for evidence of his product at the college, "Mr. College doesn't want me, so why should I do anything for them?" Support has to be a two-way street, was the feeling of one citizen of Olds.

Informants have reported a strong anti-education bias in the community, an attitude that says, "Show me. Prove to me that education is important . . . and educated people are valuable members of the community." The college did not have a particularly strong reputation in the farming community in the early 1980s.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, at that time, college employees report the college as being taken for granted. Townspeople were critical of the college, and some staff recall instances where students were treated poorly. A faculty member claimed to have heard from people who lived in town that the town was split into two groups: the faculty and students, and the citizens of Olds. Curiously, "as soon as you get out of Olds, people's perception about the college is good," related a college employee who lived in the neighboring town of Carstairs. "Maybe it's just the fact that you're too close."

In reference to town-gown relations, Birdsall (1975) reported to the effect that "a man is not without honor save in his own country" (p. 60). Students of farming families felt there was nothing the college could teach them, and those students who were not of farming families tended to go to other colleges or university. Very seldom did students come to Olds College from the local high school. It seemed that the further one got from Olds, the greater the reputation the college had. College folk felt the townsfolk had forgotten from where their bread and butter came. A couple of staff reported that they would have liked to demonstrate the effect of the college on the town and replicate a provocative U.S. demonstration by taking "a page out of a real red-neck effort down in Colorado. I'd like to take the payroll of Olds College, pay everybody in two-dollar bills, and just watch them go through the town."

As mentioned earlier, Birdsall reported the acrimony between the town and college boys which has continued to the present, but to a much lesser degree. During the early 1980s, however, donnybrooks between the two factions were not uncommon. College students live in town and contribute to the local economy yet at best were treated with indifference.

The history and environment of Olds College presented the new president with an enormous challenge. College programs were not necessarily in tune with a changing industrial environment; the college had little slack in a period of restraint; the residence, library, farm, and other buildings were inadequate; many of the instructional staff were technically competent but, as former civil servants in the Department of Agriculture, were not trained in teaching; the student population was changing; and the community was suspicious of the college. Dan Cornish's predecessor had begun to develop an infrastructure but had operated in a very authoritarian fashion centralizing the decision-making process. The direction of the college was unclear. The college was alienated from the Department of Advanced Education. The staff lacked confidence in and mistrusted the administration; "the protective membrane had been removed, and all they saw was blood and guts." A staff member likened the feeling at the college to a family whose parents had been killed. The scene was set for the arrival of the new president, the topic of the next chapter in The Story of Olds College.

5

Chapter 6

Leadership and the Mandate

At the time of the appointment of the new president in 1982, the college had experienced four tumultuous years under an authoritarian administrator who, in the eyes of one informant, had "rocked the boat and had shaken a few feathers and got people off their backsides and stirred them up one way or another, whether it was the right way or not." Change was long overdue, and many of the people interviewed conceded, in retrospect, "that was good at the time," since the staff had become quite comfortable in the civil service culture which developed over 65 years of direct government administration. There was little doubt that many were longing nostalgically for the old days; one informant recalled, "It was better the way it was," and now, "You know, we're vulnerable, we're getting slayed. There's blood all over the place! It's worse than it was." Clearly, there was a lot of distrust between faculty and management, confusion was rampant, and the organization was drifting. The time was ripe for new leadership.

The President and His Approach

Prior to his appointment as president of Olds College, Dan Cornish had been a consultant for a prestigious international management consulting firm and academic vice-president of Mount Royal College in Calgary. He holds an earned Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Alberta.

He is an impressive figure. Tall, with a fringe of brown hair and a bushy, swashbuckling moustache which is bordering on a handlebar, he is often seen wearing cowboy boots and with a toothpick hanging jauntily from his mouth. He dresses tastefully but not too formally. Most Fridays he and his family can be seen in a local restaurant, where he has supper and mixes with the townsfolk. As one staff member who lives in town observed, "He goes in relaxed looking, he wears jeans"; his very approachable manner "establishes that he lives in the community and that he is relaxed and comfortable here." Laid back and open, he is an eloquent speaker with a forthright style using straight language embellished with stories, parables, and metaphors.

As a speaker he quickly establishes rapport with his audience with his "down home," sincere, and genuine style. He tries to avoid microphones and podiums and prefers to speak directly. Cornish uses self-disclosure often and frequently shares aspects of his personal life. He spoke to the student body on the subject of alcohol abuse (see Appendix 4), a problem which has sporadically plagued the college over the years. Readers are reminded of former principal Birdsall's account of the difficulties alcohol-related issues presented earlier chief executive officers of Olds College (pp. 87-88). Cornish appealed to the students:

> Let me tell you, I'm forty-seven and I've been trying to lose fat for the last couple of months so I don't get a heart attack, and I walk around and run about town, so I see you anytime between six a.m. and ten p.m. And I know what people mean when I get complaints about Olds College students rushing down Fiftieth on Thursday nights on the way to the bar. People are afraid for their lives!

On another occasion, in addressing a management group, he revealed his salary as a consultant and the commensurate price his personal life and lifestyle paid. His authenticity and astuteness contribute to his compelling presence. He has the aura of an evangelical preacher.

There was consensus among staff interviewed that the most critical incident at Olds College was the appointment of Dan Cornish as president. Faculty report that Cornish's first year was one of assessment, as one instructor noted: "He sat on everything for about a year, and he just looked around to see what he could do." A manager put it succinctly:

> I think he had a pretty clear agenda not very long after his being here, Cornish. And his agenda was, determine the mandate for the institution and get people onside; two, develop the physical and programmatic resources in order to help us achieve that mandate.

Cornish reflected back to a commitment he made to himself that for two years he would not make a lot of changes: "Do it slowly, to learn first about the organization, and it became pretty clear that there was confusion within the organization about the direction of the institution." It was obvious to him that the college was not a community college in the comprehensive sense; rather it was "a specialized technical training institution with a focus on agriculture." Cornish likened the stages and tasks of his administration to a series of hills in Deception Pass. In order to return to Lake Louise from a lodge, it is necessary to climb through Deception Pass, so called because the climber is deceived into thinking the top of each of the four successive hills is the summit of the ridge. One reaches the top of the first hill to find it is not the top but a plateau with another hill rising, and so on.

The first plateau to be reached involved determining the competence of personnel, "particularly the senior management team," and getting "a sense of the organization clarified; we got some of the senior role models sorted around and changed in terms of people who were facilitative kinds of managers, as opposed to hierarchical." Observers of this process acknowledge that the administration took risks in minimizing the trauma of the people affected, which did a number of things: "It sent a message but also showed that Dan had now analyzed the place long enough and was ready to move." His actions signalled he was going to hire "the movers and shakers" who would make a difference. Toward the end of that first phase, Cornish appointed Dr. Bob Bigsby as Academic Dean and shortly thereafter as Academic Vice-President. In so doing he stabilized a situation, since there had been a succession of five different deans in six years. Cornish could then focus on obtaining much-needed capital funds and generally tend to the environment, leaving the internal college management to the capable Bigsby. Other important activities in this first plateau were to establish direction for the college, to develop decision-making systems and quality infrastructure. The development of these and following activities will be described in detail in upcoming sections.

Once having crossed the first plateau, the college then had to climb the second hill, which involved the assessment of program quality by industry, faculty, and students. In addition, evaluation, instructional support, and faculty/staff development were emphasized.

The third hill, which Cornish believes the organization is now beginning to climb, involves a commitment to human resource development. His attentions up to now have been primarily external, and the next plateau will involve the realization of some of the values that have been articulated. He states: "For me it's going to mean a little less focus outside, more of a focus inside to help coach and encourage people, champion bureaucracy bashers and champion innovators and, you know, champion people who take risks."

The Deception Pass metaphor is linear and perhaps misleading. One manager emphasized that, while there are priorities, they are being addressed simultaneously, and it is oversimplistic to view organizational progress sequentially. Once the mandate is developed, resources still need attention and people need to be hired and staff developed. The focus does not preclude other activity. Another aspect of the metaphor which is important is, as Dan Cornish notes, "We haven't reached the final peak, and I think we're likely beginning to realize that we never will."

The President as Chief Mentor

The president has deeply felt personal beliefs and a compelling leadership philosophy which have influenced the organization. Empowerment, consultation, and "the preeminence" of the individual are central values for him. A staff member stated, "We've got a very solid vision, and it comes directly from the top." Cornish's leadership style is based on a profound belief in the philosophy which he calls the "consultation of stakeholders--everybody has a right and a responsibility to be involved." His conviction is that people want meaning in what they do. He stated:

> We are all of us at once alone in our own heads but together in a society, and somehow we struggle knowing that at the end we die, but knowing, on the other hand, that it's possible while we live to do unbelievable things. And so somehow we struggle to bring those two poles together into something that we call meaning, that what I do in life is meaningful to other people; it's a contribution; it makes me feel important.

Fundamentally, because people want meaning in what they do, they work together. Opportunity to input into what transpires in an organization is one of the essential things that provides meaning for people. Therefore, Cornish postulates, "consultation is the heart of the organization, and communication is the blood." Consultation is intraorganizational and extraorganizational. Cornish indicated that his clients are the managers, faculty, and students with whom he works. Similarly, in terms of consultation with industry through industrial reviews, the same moral imperative which runs through a healthy organization comes into play--an openness to clients. If people participate in the establishment and implementation of organizational objectives, they become part of the process. Therefore, Cornish asserts that "the bridge in terms of bringing goal congruency between individual goals and organizational goals is a process of participation, consultation, and, essentially, a democratic operation where you involve people." However, the organization is structured in a hierarchy recognizing that total consultation will not always result in consensus. Choice then is made between alternatives which have been presented through consultation. According to one informant, the power in that is that people can say, "I was asked, I participated, and this is my small part of the outcome," or, "They chose not to accept my input for those reasons." If the input of staff is rejected too often, it is probably time for them to go because they would not derive much meaning from their participation, "unless you see yourself as the court jester or the devil's advocate," for which Cornish believes there are places in organizations.

Ultimately it is the Board which has endorsed the statement, "We believe in an egalitarian, participant, democratic organization." Consultation will be investigated more thoroughly later, but it is important to highlight how much the concept has been articulated throughout the institution. On the subject of consultation and participation, one manager explained, "In very simplistic terms, it gives you ownership, it gives you pride in achievement, it gives you a sense of community, and even if you go away, there's something that you can hold onto." In reference to Dan Cornish, a faculty member was unsure of the label but knew what it meant. She recounted,

> And he began really to initiate some changes. He believes very firmly in decision making, egalitarian, or whatever--he has this long thing he calls it: democratic egalitarian democracy, or whatever, anyway, which people find--sometimes I think they really like it, but a lot of times it also leads to a lot of time-consuming activities. You don't get a decision, bang, like that.

Everyone interviewed reported a significant increase in communication and consultation to the point of overload.

Earlier, in the discussion of the Olds College environment, Cornish referred to change as a generic condition not only in agriculture but also in society at large. He suspects that the most difficult thing to inculcate into Olds College "is to welcome change with wide open arms, recognizing that it's both an opportunity and a threat." He perceives change as an opportunity, a condition which to some extent is neutral, not an automatic source of stress. Rather than getting comfortable, people have to embrace the conditions which create opportunities for us, "and they create the joy of facing new challenges and failing and succeeding." A senior administrator echoes the president's message with a note of urgency and asserts that it is impossible to go back to the civil servant days or ever maintain the status quo. The college must change, "and that's not negotiable: We cannot not change in the business we're in," and he reiterated, "In the times we're in and the business we're in, we simply can't not change."

Cornish's ultimate goal as chief mentor and leader is attempting to create the conditions which allow people to grow themselves. Consistent with the concepts of participation and democracy, he describes how he feels people in his organization should approach change:

> "Folks, there's some great star that if we hook our wagons to, we'll be able to accommodate all the change in the world. It doesn't need to be a threat to us, because we've got some grander vision that ties us into meaning in what we do, and an essential part of that meaning is to treat each other the way you want to be treated, and to learn from that." One of the other values, of course, is that we're a learning organization; we're not a teaching organization: We do that if we learn properly; if we all commit to learning, then teaching will take place.

Cornish is attempting to create a climate which challenges his organization with the question, "Are you prepared to commit to this dream?" If so, then he enjoins his staff to work together to build the conditions which allow everyone to move ahead, learning each in his or her own way, and to recognize that is what happens in the classroom. This approach will have a profound impact on the way learning is structured.

No doubt there will be chronic resistors, and Cornish's reaction is "to politely and respectfully" try to accommodate them within the organization, since "the organization can't be peopled by individuals all of one mind." Everybody should be respected "whether they're the movers and shakers, or whether they're the consolidators."

Cornish explained the conundrum which faces the college in serving agriculture, in that there is not a "well established commitment to think out the strategy" in preparing human resources for the unstable, uncertain agricultural environment. The many actors in the training game "in agriculture create more uncertainty for the practitioner. What are the standards? To whom does the client go? . . . the Department of

Agriculture? the university, the college?" Even the implement dealers try to influence clients. The client is in despair in terms of knowing where to begin. This issue needs to be clarified for the educator involved in agriculture: "We need to define what we think the future for agriculture's going to be in the next decade, and how that implies we should be training people." A strength and weakness, the open entry to agriculture has to be ameliorated to provide consistency as an individual moves from prevocational or vocational to technological to professional training. As Cornish observes, the pivotal point is "learning to learn, so that no matter where you come into this process, you'll know how to continue learning as a practicing agriculturalist."

Cornish's Christmas address to the staff focussed on improvement, which is an integral part of his personal and management philosophy. He related the highlights of his message, which emphasized the value of integrity and trust in working together in the context of world uncertainty and rapid technological change and its implications for teaching and learning at Olds College. After quoting from various leaders talking about transformational leadership, he related two stories, the "Storyteller's Creed," the foreword of which talks about the trust and beauty of the simple things learned in kindergarten such as holding hands when crossing the street, and the importance of milk and cookies, and "The Rabbi Gift," which is in the Foreword of M. Scott Peck's A Different Drum, a powerful story which, in summary, is about faith and valuing each other based on a rabbi's comment to an Abbot whose monastery is falling into disrepair, which was, "The Messiah is one of you." The power of this message transformed their relationships as the monks viewed each other with a new respect which recognized an essential quality and ultimately attracted others, thereby saving the monastery. Cornish ended the speech with a quote from the Gospel according to Mark: "'And the last shall be first, and the first shall be last, and if you give so much as a cup of water to one of these, you act in my name.'" His final remarks were particularly powerful:

> "You know, at Christmastime, when we're talking about what the values are in our organization, and what we do to make ourselves truly excellent for the people that we serve, I leave you with one message: The Messiah is one of us."

Evidence of Cornish's empowering style is apparent throughout the organization and is certainly implicit in his credo of "egalitarian, participative, democratic" decision making. In the context of program review, he stressed the value of faculty seeking outside input and second opinions with regard to their respective programs, which may frequently be the same observations administration had made. He believes it is the role of administration to get the second opinion. It means that they have respect for their own judgement abilities, whereas "people who worship and grovel at your feet means that they have no respect for themselves." It is important to share ideas with people and get them to work on them so that the final decision is believed to be their own. "If they don't finally own the conclusion, it's not going to work anyway: They're going to confound you."

In discussing personal views, values, and visions of things relative to organizations, Cornish told the story of when he was working with the management consulting firm, he, among other trainees, was asked to "take a line and draw a picture of your past and future." He mentioned that most people drew a straight line moving up with plateaus, while he drew circles spiralling upwards, although he qualified it by confessing he was sure that the circles went up. The idea was to suggest that at some point one is rising but coming down too, and then getting ready to go up again. "And I think that that's not an inappropriate way of viewing life in organizations." Life, he believes, curves; it is not "a single-factor equation; as we use in the jargon, it is a multivariant analysis." Cornish believes that a good theory should always have some unanswered questions associated with it; if not, then we are dealing with a deity. Therefore, "if you get a theory that gives you some kind of an improved approximation on understanding organizations and the way people work together, then you've made some progress. But it just opens the door to more questions."

He admitted to getting enthusiastic about the latest theory and having to remember that it is only a piece, and in the future, upon reflection, to realize that it was a phase, a spiral. Spirals within spirals reminded him of a book, Chaos, he had recently read which legitimates that science is realizing that reality is a "many, many layered onion" that goes down to the most finite detail. He confessed he was unsure where these philosophical foundations had originated:

> I guess part of it comes from some of the original views of life and self that my mother communicated to me, but I also, looking back, didn't realize how fortunate I was to sit under the tutelage for a semester in Biology of Ludwig von Bertalanffy.

As a president, Cornish believes his task is to manage boundaries and definitions between people or organizations, and in so doing one collects information and gets input. Then

> you interpret that input into a certain kind of form that you can handle, which allows you then to develop an adaptation strategy. So I see the model as part of an integrated process: strategic planning is your data collection first, then you do

> some of the interpretation, then you develop an adaptation strategy, which turns around and becomes the objectives of specific roles of your strategic planning activity.

Cornish places great value on and constantly refers to the importance of "how we treat each other." He believes a high priority should be placed on the people in the organization, "whether they're people that scrub the floors or people who manage the overall college." This emphasis is in sharp contrast to the traditional, hierarchical, authoritarian orientation of his predecessor. His caring about staff is evidenced in his offhand comments which indicate to staff that they are valuable and he notices. A sign over the conference clerk's desk read, "23,800 days until retirement." "Counting them off, eh?" he quipped. On a different occasion, passing the registration desk in residence, he joked with the reception staff in reference to a posted notice informing students, "Sorry, we don't have stamps for the machine 'cause Canada Post doesn't either and won't for two weeks." He commented in a friendly exchange, "Can you imagine the Post Office without stamps? Maybe you could ask people to scotch tape money to their envelopes." The president often lunches in the main cafeteria and is always making eye contact, waving to and greeting staff and students alike. He stresses the value of the organization in focusing upon people, "and the preeminence of individuals all the way from the so-called lower positions to the highest positions, and working together in an environment of mutual respect." A mid-manager reflected Cornish's sentiments: "Everybody is valuable and everybody's contribution is valued. We are all expected, then, to give our contribution and not to withhold." One support staff member referred to a "sensitivity" toward staff by the administration. He went on to say that management was sensitive to what "the man at the bottom level" was thinking and what his concerns were. This sensitivity is very different than the pre-1982 period where, as one staff member recollects, if the former administration was concerned about something, "everybody retreated, up came the drawbridge, and the guns were pointing out like everybody was ready to fire a round."

Another important value for Cornish is excellence. Remarked one manager in reference to the president, "He's always stressing being the best at what you do." The expression "Olds is the best damned agricultural college in Canada" is heard throughout the college. Concern for quality is very evident. Quality and excellence in program delivery came up frequently in the interviews. Cornish stated that he believed it is imperative that the chief executive officer challenge employees to be excellent at whatever they do:

> I guess what you have to do is hold people up against standards of quality performance, and not necessarily hold up standards of specific outcomes. Do what you want to do within the context of what you're hired to do here, but do it as well as you can. Teach in a traditional fashion and test in a traditional fashion, but damn well do it the very best that you can.

The intent of describing Cornish and some elements of his philosophy at this early stage is to provide a background perspective that may add meaning to the strategies and activities which took place subsequent to his arrival at Olds College. More information about his beliefs, values, and attitudes will be revealed as the story of Olds College unfolds.

The Mandate

The time was right for change at Olds College in 1982. An employee recalls a readiness "where somebody who could come in and patch some fences and implement a more participative style and that sort of thing was basically planting that seed in a much more fertile ground, that the time was kind of right." As mentioned, Cornish did not make any initial major changes, but it was clear the college needed a direction. Approximately two years after his arrival the planning began.

Olds College's first Development Plan, produced in 1981 by the former president, had met with limited success in convincing the government of the need for support. College staff recognized that industry was changing and that, while Olds College enrollments had stabilized, enrollments in agricultural training had dropped significantly across Canada. They were also aware that many other institutions in the province had experienced growth in student enrollment and expansion of facilities and programs through the boom period of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Enrollments in other Alberta agricultural programs had dropped significantly. It was apparent that "rapid change, competition for scarce government funds, a continuing severe cycle for agriculture, and the need to foster positive change called for a serious review of the 1981 Plan" (At the Head of Its Class, p. 1). Therefore, in 1984 a thorough review began under the direction of the Board's Program and Campus Planning Committee. Representatives from various interest groups from across the college and the Board Committee under the chairmanship of the president formed a Council on Renewal and Strategic Instructional Planning for the College (CRISP College).

The first task of CRISP College was to conduct a "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats" analysis of the college with the complete staff. As a consequence of this review, the college was restructured "to give proper priority to an instructional division with an instructional design capability, and with integration of on- and off-campus learning" (At the Head of Its Class, p. 1). The foregoing statement is particularly significant as CRISP College gave direction for Extension and Instructional Support--two initiatives which will be explored in depth later.

The committee, after an intensive analysis of the college and its environment, recognizing competition from neighboring comprehensive community colleges, the economic downturn in oil and gas, the weak agricultural economy which accounted for declining enrollment in colleges of agriculture across Canada, and with a strong tradition in agriculture, "began to sense in its past a rationale for its future" (At the Head of Its Class, p. 1). CRISP College's decision was to reaffirm the role of Olds College as Alberta's only college with "a concentrated focus on practical agricultural education." Interviewees indicated the importance of the reaffirmation of the college's mandate as a major critical incident second only to the appointment of Cornish. The following mandate generated by CRISP College is unequivocal in rejecting comprehensiveness in favor of an agricultural focus:

> Olds College strives to prepare people for success in the world of direct agricultural production and technical support, agri-business support and agricultural products processing, in a learning environment which recognizes the importance of:
> - a caring, yet demanding instructor/student relationship;
> - practical, problem-solving application of knowledge in the "hands-on" tradition; and
> - demonstration of productively sized enterprises, and use of operating enterprises as laboratories.
> - the student's subsequent integration into an ever-changing environment. (See Appendix 5.)

In the summer of 1986 Cornish invited 12 leaders of the agricultural industry to a President's Advisory Committee meeting, where the above mandate was reaffirmed. In addition, they stressed the importance of developing strong business and interpersonal skills in graduates.

Nobody could have anticipated the power of the mandate in coalescing the entire college. Cornish recalled the committee reflected on what the past was all about and what the present and future challenge is: "We're an agricultural institute. See, folks, look at agriculture. Look, look, good, good, we got it." A manager remarked that the agricultural mandate was apparent in retrospect, but it was so close it was not readily seen. He used as an analogy the fact that he sometimes loses his keys even though they are always in the same place, but he just does not quite see them. Cornish emphasized at that time, and since, that it is not only the direction, but also the quality with which you follow the direction. A senior administrator recounted his impression of the committee's recommendations:

> Look, you're an agricultural college, you're a recognized agricultural college. Don't mess with that, but if you want to mess around with something, set your standards higher. Aim for a standard of excellence. Aim to become the best. Aim to increase your service within the field.

A manager reiterated his impression of what transpired once the mandate was established:

> was to say that Olds College is one of the best, or one of the leading colleges in Canada, bar none. And went out with that message and weren't afraid to say it and took that message to Advanced Education, to Alberta Agriculture, to other colleges, other associations, and kind of blew our own horn, and in fact, I think, we have led the way in terms of, certainly, agricultural colleges, in terms of program development, review, innovative funding.

In general, the staff felt the mandate was very welcome and "the best thing that happened," although there was some risk. There was a temptation to become more general, given the downtrend in agriculture. It was recognized that there was a niche in preparing students for careers in agribusiness. Modern business practice was seen to be important to those students returning to the farm or ranch.

Other public institutions were struggling for their share of the limited dollars. "Agriculture wasn't necessarily the glamor boy or girl, but because we stuck to it and people eventually realized that we were unique, I think that was a real winning thing to do," declared one faculty member. Staff are proud of Olds College's 75-year history. They indicate that they have the agricultural history and, as a faculty member remarked, "we're sticking with agriculture." Another instructor stated with pride that there was a "refocus, back to the soil."

The establishment of the mandate was the first important step in re-creating faith both internally and with the government. The timing was perfect. The provincial government, with the economic downturn, wanted an alternative to the boom-bust climate created by the oil and gas industry. Economic diversification including agriculture was the strategic direction chosen. Cornish referred to a form of serendipity which occurred as a result of reaffirmation of the mission statement. He was not conscious of the tremendous value of the renewed mandate in the college's relationship with Edmonton: "*It seemed like once we became clear on that issue here, it became easier to argue the case in Edmonton. And so then the capital money started to flow*" (my italics).

He added that from 1984 through to mid-1987, the college has been dealing with the positive ramifications of having made that mission clarification. Prior to 1984 Olds College received little funding for capital improvements, and its facilities were poor compared with other colleges. For example, the library, according to one staff member, was "in a barn, with mice and whatnot, and people would go in, grab their book, and get out, and no studying, none of that thing, because there was a perception like, 'Well, you're not going to spend money there.'" In 1984-85 funds for facilities were made available to the college for farm improvement, residence renovations, a new Learning Resource Center (Library), and, just recently, sod turning for a new Plant Science Building.

Most staff feel comfortable about the "very solid vision" which "comes directly from the top." There is a consensus, a "kind of common, joint understanding" about the direction of the college. Self-awareness, generated by the CRISP College process, means, in the words of one faculty member, "As we get to know ourselves better, we can do our job better; and to do our job better means adapting to change."

Some faculty members feel differently about the agricultural mandate. They expressed that it was only partially integrated into the fabric of the college in that the decision was an "upper-echelon, administrative" decision. They feel the decision was good and was "fairly welcome" but that they were "sort of informed from above," but it was never implemented collegewide, and "it hasn't yet been achieved." At the time of writing, Cornish was drafting an update of the original mandate document.

There was some pain in the organization because there are programs that do not really fit the agricultural mold. There is bitterness in some quarters:

> When you go to our graduation and you hear all the goodness and wonder of agriculture, and then you have a hundred and fifty people cross the stage who are not agricultural, who have no recognition in that whole day, you wonder why people are upset and feeling edgy and wondering what's going on? There it is.

A perspective shared by a few was that Fashion Merchandising and Secretarial Arts find the term "agriculture" a bit offensive and feel that they are being undermined, although they concede that they have been given equal status and have been reassured that their programs are considered part of the college. A few interviewees commented that the Fashion Merchandising and Secretarial programs were valuable to the college because they were primarily comprised of women who attracted men to the college. Generally, the sense was that, although non-agricultural, these programs did not feel threatened, and the college was making an attempt to make everything very cohesive.

However, the problem still exists. Bigsby, in answering the question, "How do you weave the Fashion Merchandising Program and Secretarial Arts into the Agricultural Story?" replied,

> They remain unique vestiges of Olds College history as current, quality programs, and they lend their business expertise to agricultural programs. Goodness knows, marketing, merchandising, and small business operations skills are critical to any component of the complex and wide agricultural spectrum.

An instructor reported initiatives in the Secretarial Department to change some program content to align with Land Administration, which involves making contracts for utility or oil companies to drill or lay pipelines across people's land. Students would learn how to manage a Land Agent office. Some frustration was experienced in the library where, as a result of budget cuts, the general part of the collection suffers in favor of the agricultural collection. Yet the library staff is proud of this excellent agricultural collection; "it's really quite outstanding."

The Marketing Challenge

CRISP College, in addition to developing a mandate for Olds College, established a mission statement which encapsulates the college's "ultimate aim and characterizes our central values, strengths and personality." The mission statement connects the target population and the college's unique excellence as follows: **"The primary mission of Olds College is to provide current quality education, training and services for people who are involved directly and indirectly in agricultural endeavors"** (*At the Head of Its Class*, p. 4). The college's mission is interpreted by staff as simply "We're an agricultural college," that is, "We are committed to an agricultural focus, and comprehensiveness is not for us."

The next step for the administration was to assess the image and attitudes people had towards the college. In early 1987, the college conducted a marketing survey. College personnel were very aware of the declining enrollments in colleges with agricultural programs across Canada, including Alberta's Lakeland and Fairview Colleges, although Olds College had experienced a small increase in enrollments. The perception of agriculture seemed negative with poor crop prices, drought, and high interest rates. Almost daily the media carried stories of farmers losing family farms, not to mention the real-life situation which was occurring in most rural communities.

The marketing survey, which was conducted by McKim Advertising Agency, generated three basic perspectives or themes which summarized their study. The first was that young people and advisors of young people have a very narrow perception of agriculture. A staff member summarized her impression of potential students' attitudes towards farming: "'Oh, my God, I'd never go into farming! It's terrible. I'm going to end up in a dust bowl in [illegible]skatchewan with hundred-degree weather and not a blade of grass in the ground.'" The thinking of the general public, from a respondent's perspective, was that "agriculture is farming; farming is dying; don't go into agriculture because there is no future in the family farm; therefore, don't go to Olds College." Internally, college personnel were aware that this picture was too simplistic and overly pessimistic. Industrial reviews and their experience indicated that there were many attractive occupations in the agricultural service industries, including new areas of urban agriculture and the many facets of horticulture. The perception of the "people out there" was very negative towards agriculture, which, from the perspective of those experts in the college, was not realistic. A staff member summarizes the situation: "It doesn't matter whether or not that's real or not; if that's people's perception . . . then their perception is their reality, and our reality doesn't mean a thing."

The second perspective, in the eyes of the graduates of the college and the general public, was that, "even though we are agricultural, we do it well," remarked a communications staff member. The Alumni Association was extremely supportive of the college, and the statistics demonstrated that 82% of the graduates were employed in their fields within six months of graduation. The survey data indicated that there was a good feeling in the environment towards Olds College. It had a sound reputation, and the graduates were getting good jobs.

The third proposition was that agriculture is not merely farming, it varies from "farm service to research to marketing to business to management and banking." Trained graduates are required to fill vacancies in agricultural service-related industry. In summary, according to one manager, there are

> two positives and a negative, and what you have to do is you have to build upon the one positive of your reputation and the statistical information, together with the information that says people out there don't understand what agriculture is, and say, "Okay, communicate those messages to the people so they're prepared to buy in.".

People still had an excellent perception of Olds College, but it was the farming industry that was slipping. "So we had to reposition ourselves," stated a staff member. The public was unaware of the diversity, sophistication, and opportunities in the agriculture industry. After careful analysis it was decided that the college would market with a career focus.

A staff communications specialist pointed out that educational institutions are unique from a marketing context. Since they are a process, there are products at the beginning and the end. In his words,

> Well, up front our product are programs and services that we offer to people coming in. At the end point those people become our products with value added. . . . and therefore our clients at that phase become particular industries, agriculture in a broader sense, and society as a whole, like any other educational institution.

The challenge is to convince the potential client that Olds College has the career programs which can lead to good-paying jobs. Major attitudinal shifts have to occur on the part of the public, because traditionally, as noted by an informant:

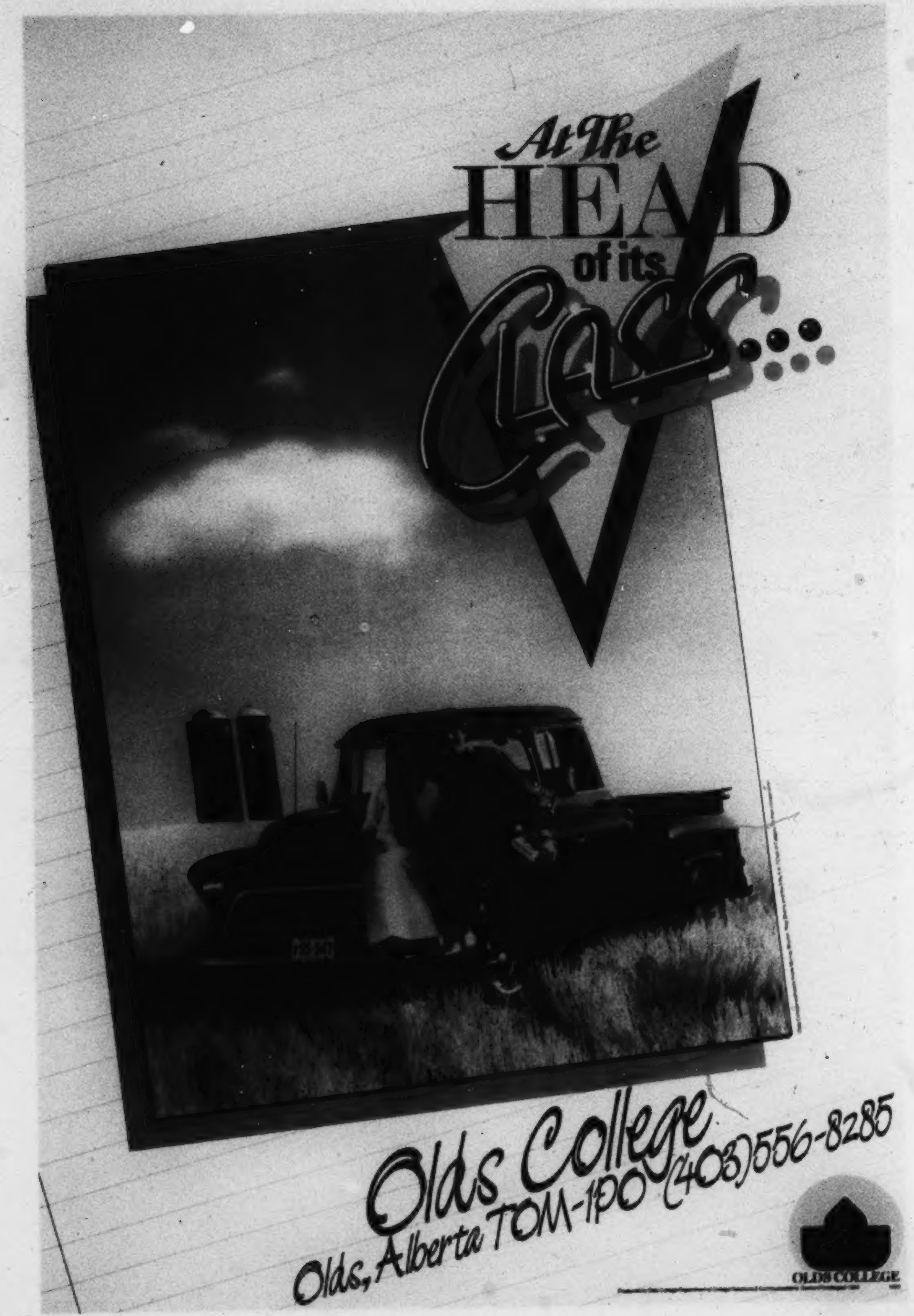
> you came here if you were a farm kid probably going to end up back at the farm one day so that you could do your work properly and efficiently. Now it's someplace that you come to get a career. It's more important.

The college has initiated attitudinal change on a broad scale. College personnel have attempted to work with the agricultural industry "to promote itself, to promote agriculture" in order to offset the powerful negative effect of the media which has focused upon the hardships of farming. In addition, the college is initiating joint promotion through the agricultural colleges. The foregoing are attempts to change attitudes in the environment collaboratively with other institutions instead of in isolation.

Therefore, the major task was to change the public's misconception that because people have been forced off the farm, agriculture was a poor vocational choice. A career focus coupled with success stories was the thematic approach the college adopted in its marketing strategy. The administration and board appropriated sufficient funds to contemporize the college's publications around a career focus. A brochure was designed which succinctly and attractively reviewed each program and was specifically designed as a first-contact document. The prospective students could clip off a pre-addressed card to obtain additional information on the program in which they were interested. In many ways the transformation of the old image captured in the previous public relations materials to the new image symbolized the shift in the college as a whole from the traditional "back-to-the-farm" approach to the cutting-edge agricultural technology reflected in many of the programs.

A market study was conducted which included two different high school focus groups composed of students from three different high schools in each. The purpose of the focus group was to obtain the reaction of potential clients to various posters which would be the central image theme of all the college's advertising. The former award-winning poster, Plate 1, was shown to the groups. The group's

Plate 1. Traditional image of agriculture poster, Olds College 1985



At The HEAD of its Class...

Olds College

Olds, Alberta T0M-1P0 (403)556-8285

OLDS COLLEGE

feelings were summed up by one girl, whom a staff member recalls exclaiming,

> "Oh, yes, those are two kids that grew up as next-door neighbors, they've gone to school together forever, as soon as they get out of school they're going to get married, she's going to have three kids, he's going to go out and run the farm," and she just ran the whole image straight down the line. And every other in this room and they said, "Yes, that's exactly what it is." And said, "I don't want that. That's not what I'm looking for any more. That's not there any more. Maybe it was Mom, but not me."

The communications staff at Olds College knew the popular old poster was very wrong in that it was designed for the wrong time, and the focus groups proved them correct. It was wrong because it was portraying nostalgia, a very traditional image of agriculture, and stereotypical sex roles. The poster was "totally and completely supporting the negative image of agriculture because, while it looks nice, it's dying. That vision of the farm is the part that's dying." Another criticism of the poster was that, because it pictured a truck, it was reinforcing the notion held by some prospective students that the college was a place that produced "Oldsmobile trucks."

On the other hand, students in the focus group were enthusiastic about the new poster, which was "modern, future looking" and against "that blue background" (see Plate 2). The message which the new poster was intended to communicate was, from the communications manager's perspective, "Agriculture is a modern, technologically advanced industry. We provide the training for that industry, and this is the best place to get it, and that's where your future is." It was generally felt, he believed, that the image and values portrayed in the poster "overlap the values that are here and the direction that we're going." Each of the items in the future-oriented poster symbolized various college programs.

Plate 2. Future-oriented poster, Olds College 1988

THINK OF US AS YOUR FUTURE

Drop us a note, or give us a phone call.
We'd love to hear from you, and we'd love
to send you our college literature.

Olds
College

Olds College
Olds, Alberta T0M 1P0
(403) 556-8281

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He reported that the only criticisms internally were with departments who might not have been represented. Some people were critical of the computer, which is slightly out of date. "Other than those particular things, people have brought the vision of what we're trying to say." College personnel see it as a powerful image of what the college is becoming in response to the industrial reviews. The poster is a reflection of the college's new identity.

The mandate and marketing thrust are epitomized in the words "Proudly Serving Agriculture" which are written on a banner which was hung over the entrance of the college's new Learning Resource Center (L.R.C.) (see Plate 3). The L.R.C. was viewed by college staff as a symbol of the college having finally arrived. Interestingly, the banner on the L.R.C. is a symbol on a symbol. Originally the sign was intended to be part of the publicity for the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations of Olds College in the fall of 1988. The sign struck a note of accord with college personnel, so it was not taken down. The communications manager recalls, "The words 'Proudly Serving Agriculture' is what in my mind the essence of what our mission is, and so therefore it's been left there in terms of its internal significance more than just its external one." He explained that the history of Olds College has been one of proud service to agriculture. The intention of the banner was to pull together the mission and the history in order to create "that feeling for people" so that when they walk in and see the banner, a sense of pride is generated. He continued,

> Our primary service to agriculture is an educational service, but it's clearly not the only service we provide, and the essence of the word "Proudly" is how we respond to that

Plates 3 and 4. Banner over Learning Resources Center entrance--symbol on symbol, Olds College 1988

erving

> mission, in other words, how we perform that mission, and this institution's history has been one of proud service to agriculture.

The general reaction of college staff to the words on the banner was very positive. One student, in relating the attitude of his classmates towards the banner, emphasized a new respect students had for agriculture: "Geez, I thought my dad was a dumb dirt farmer until I came here and realized he is doing things right; he knows what he is doing." He observed that most people in agribusiness tend to be proud and independent people by nature. Through the sign a student felt, in a broader scope, that the college was attempting to change attitudes in society in general, "that farming is more than just planting seeds in the dirt and complaining about whether there is enough rain or not." He believed that the college was trying to make people understand that agriculture is a very high-tech environment and as practitioners "to be proud of what you do."

College staff felt proud of the college's unique agricultural mandate and were "holding [their] heads up high." An administrator proudly stated that Olds had a phenomenal reputation in agriculture and that the further one got from Olds, "the better the reputation gets for this institution. . . . get lost on Vancouver Island and the person you bump into has probably been here!"

In general, all people interviewed felt the slogan captured the essence of the college's mission. It is interesting that the communications manager who created the banner acknowledges that the "simple, symbolic" words which described the mission were mostly consciously designed, although he admitted that "there's a certain amount of this that is unconscious; there always is in this sort of thing.

There's a certain serendipity to the odd thing that happens." The message reflected the spirit of Olds College and is very meaningful to its members.

Complementary Leadership

Soon after Cornish arrived he realized that the senior management group would have to change if he were to build the team which would reflect his participative philosophy. After two years he had surrounded himself with some quality people. He found in Bigsby the qualities he was looking for in an academic leader.

Cornish is widely recognized as being the external liaison person. "He's known how to deal with the power brokers," observed an instructor. He has a reputation of being very effective in public relations and in securing funds from Edmonton. People see him as promoting the college externally, articulating the college's mandate to government and industry. Informants believed he should be credited with the "very, very favorable treatment" the college has received from the Department of Advanced Education. In some quarters Cornish is referred to as the phantom president, as some people have not seen him as much as they would like. The most important priority called for the president to profile the college externally in order to build confidence and to secure the much-needed capital funds. It was impossible to accomplish the external relations mission and to be in touch with the day-to-day happenings. He needed someone he could trust to provide the necessary academic leadership.

Bigsby has a strong pedagogical and instructional reputation and shares Cornish's vision for Olds College. The two are seen as a team throughout the college. A veteran faculty member commented that this is an excellent system, "where you've really got one good administrator looking out and then his right-hand man looking in." A mid-manager attributed the "philosophical thrust" to Cornish, and Bigsby was referred to as the "production manager." Bigsby, soon after his appointment, recommended structural changes which resulted in changes in responsibility. He set up a series of three deans and changed the name from chairmen to department heads of the different programs. A significant shift was to place the farm in the academic sector, thereby aligning it with the instructors, and therefore placing it in a much better position to exploit the potential for instruction instead of using it solely for production. A major change occurred when the authority over budgets became the responsibility of the respective academic administrator rather than the financial administrator. It was essential to Bigsby that "the authority and the responsibility had to reside at the same level, and that level had to be done at the working level. And so to me it was simply abundantly clear that that's where it had to happen." The financial administrator resigned shortly after this change.

Cornish refers to the two-headed god Janus who stood guard over the portals of Roman cities, one face looking out, the other looking in, as symbolic of Bigsby and shared leadership. He refers to himself as the external president and Bigsby as the internal president. Cornish believes that in an organization like Olds College, the line of succession should be out of the academic side. There is a difference in style in dealing with people in that Bigsby is perceived as being a little more brusque and has the image of being, as one person described, "go-get-'em, hammer-'em skills, up front and visible," which belies his sensitive side. Cornish, on the other hand, has a more diplomatic and humanitarian style.

Cornish admits their complementary style may be confusing to people sometimes, particularly if they have a traditional image of leadership:

> Confusing! I said to the folks, I said, "We're all leaders. We've got to learn both to lead and to follow, because good leaders need good followers. Some days I'll follow, and you'll lead." You know, and it's starting to generate that new cultural set of values that say, "It's okay; Bob's doing presidential stuff today. Isn't that great? It means that someday he may be able to be a president. So it's okay for me to be a leader, too."

The two leaders are often referred to in tandem: "Dan and Bob" said it is important to support the people who do the instruction in order to provide excellence; "Bigsby and Cornish" sat down and consciously planned the international initiative, and so forth. Both leaders have a mutual respect and work in concert. They have placed a high priority on developing comprehensive instructional support, which is not included in base funding; therefore, funds have to be obtained elsewhere. "Because," stated Bigsby, "in my estimation, and this is shared by Dan, those are key to institutional strength, quality, development, quality of learning environment."

Consultation of Stakeholders

The focus of discussion for this section is the exploration of Cornish's fundamental beliefs that "everybody has a right and a responsibility to be involved" and "consultation is the heart of the organization, and communication is the blood." Further, the opportunity to provide input to the organization provides meaning for its members, which, in turn, has implications for improved commitment and quality.

A manager who was interviewed reported that the management of the college is structured so that everybody can participate in everything, and the president is on record as saying, "Tell everybody everything." She felt, for example, that if she wanted to be on a committee related to farm activities, an area outside her immediate responsibility, she would be welcomed. "I may be only there as a guest, but I can certainly be involved," and it is quite possible she could glean information which may prove important for the future. A major change which has been mentioned collegewide is that Dan Cornish's philosophy that everyone should participate in everything all the time is said to be, from the perspective of one manager, "at once our biggest blessing and our biggest curse." He continued:

> As a blessing it is that you can participate in everything; you feel like a stakeholder; your input is sought; you feel like a valuable member of the team; you can participate; you learn more because you do. . . . The curse side of it, of course, is that the energy and commitment that it takes to do that puts us all under a tremendous strain most of the time. We've got workload strain; we've got communication strain.

People are appreciative of the climate which encourages participation. A middle administrator was enthusiastic:

> I have certainly many areas that I can not only receive input from, but also provide to, and the management team, particularly in the academic managers, the Deans, and those kind of folks, have been very receptive to some of the kinds of things that I've made in terms of suggestions, and I think that that's just really super.

Support staff members feel included and part of the outcome when management asks for their input, as an informant explained:

> "Okay, this is what we see as happening in the future, the changes that we've got to do as management because of the outside influences. Give us input on how best we can accomplish these changes from your point of view."

The openness is satisfying to people. A support staff worker who had participated in the budget process through his involvement gained an understanding which he shared with his co-workers of the background rationale for certain purchases. "Before [Cornish], they'd walk in and say on Monday morning, 'Oh, we're building a new building,' and you'd know nothing about it. And that's not right."

The number of meetings has increased, but so has the commitment. The Olds College Faculty Association (OCFA) executive and the executive of administration have lunch together once a month to inform each other of emerging issues, which seems to have eliminated surprises. All-staff meetings which have been reinstituted within the last two or three years have been useful as an information process where the entire staff can be updated.

Internal communication is very much improved and valued. Indeed, an interviewee noted:

> I have a feeling that our communication with other colleges and with industry and with the people who are involved in agriculture at the farm level has improved as well. I think we've hired people and altered our methods so that we are talking on a more regular basis with all of the interested groups.

This observation was corroborated by others who have noticed a significant increase in contacts with industry, particularly through the industrial reviews.

The Board is the pinnacle of the college's decision-making architecture, where all the consultation is resolved. In the event that a decision needs to be made between mutually acceptable alternatives, or in the event that consensus is possible, it is a place where the consensus is validated or matched with "the real world" and subsequently legitimated by the Board. In the final analysis it is where the policy is defined. It is not unusual for the Board to query the consultation process to determine how thorough it was and which of the college's constituencies were involved. Different representatives on the Board are asked for their input.

The Board, according to Cornish, is aware of the thoroughness of participation and consultation of stakeholders inherent in policy recommendations coming from the Academic Council and "then conducts its own final validity check on it." The six-year development of the Academic Council will be reviewed in the upcoming section, "Organizational Learning." Occasionally there are times when there are two acceptable choices and the president will not make a firm recommendation. In such instances he tries to preface it by saying,

> In terms of my best lights, this is what I think is right, but we're here to have your best lights shed on this thing, so if you decide to do something different than what I've recommended, I promise you I won't quit in the next twenty-four hours. Forty-eight maybe!

Organizational Learning

Consultation and participation have resulted in an improvement of reporting, accounting, and decision-making systems in general. The leadership is making a conscious decision to "flatten the organization" by pressing decision making to the bottom levels. The signing authority at the lowest level of the organization can now sign up to $500 where previously it was $100. Cornish believes this decision is "not inconsequential," but a few problems persist where skill development is required. Organizational learning has to take place "as the people pick up ownership and responsibility for what they do and then emerge into making more decisions on their own," mentioned a senior administrator who speculated he spent at least 20-30% of his day training employees. However, the long-range goal is eventually to free more time for the executive to plan, to be responsive to change, and thereby to enable the organization to respond to perceived change. Fundamental to the mandate to deliver a high quality of educational services to agriculture is adapting to new ways of performing.

Organizational learning takes on other forms than the one-on-one. The planning retreat is an often-used vehicle at Olds College and occurs at different levels. The management group frequently adjourns to Spring Lake Lodge, where, as an administrator reported,

> we do a lot of planning, we do a lot of airing of grudges and things that are bothering us, we get stuff out in the open, and we do it in a situation where everybody feels fairly equal. And Dan encourages people to call him Dan and to tell him what's bothering them.

Annually, in September, the Academic Council go to Goldeye for their work and planning. The Board goes to Banff, where they plan for the upcoming year. Different departments take advantage of the retreat format as well. For example, Agricultural Mechanics intended to review its instructional delivery and core curriculum, and the Computer Department has a planning retreat. One manager referred to the retreat as "a critical incident. It can change the direction of the College; it can re-mix things internally, and good things come out of it largely."

Cornish, with the assistance of the board chairman, teaches the board aspects of the college's operation and how to plan a direction. They learn together. Cornish mused, "Sometimes you wonder why you never quit teaching. You don't stop learning, so why should you be surprised at having to do that?" The board has progressed to a level where it can no longer be expected of the president and board chairman that they be the facilitator-leaders of discussions. The board has decided that they need an external facilitator for future planning retreats, "because," Cornish explained, "we've now all reached a level where we're sort of relatively equal. We have different learning needs, but we all now recognize we need to learn."

Cornish related yet another form of organizational learning which took place at the Executive Committee and lasted approximately two hours. Two senior administrators had seriously divergent views concerning the competence of a manager. After some discussion they agreed he had performed his original role reasonably well. Over the years the position had become much more comprehensive. Senior management had been unhappy with his performance; however, they had been judging the performance of the individual unconsciously in the broader context. What was required was someone with broader conceptual skills who could draw disparate groups together, skills which the present incumbent did not possess.

The dilemma was a choice between the value in organizational learning and organizational efficiency. In Cornish's words,

> Now what are we going to do in terms of providing him with the opportunity to grow into that mandate, as opposed to just chucking him off? So it turns into a very specific translation of the larger goal. If we're going to be consistent with the larger goal, we don't burn this guy.

The decision was to support the manager and help him meet the new challenge, and, if he failed, he would have been accommodated within the organization. Initially, feelings and positions between the two senior managers were strongly opposed. The president consciously and verbally set about involving the Executive Committee in solving the problem in a way that strengthened their teamwork. The integrated solution, with which everybody was comfortable, was a reframed, bigger picture than the two intractable positions. A prototypical model emerged for resolving future conflicts among themselves and within their respective divisions.

One of the most effective examples of organizational learning involves the development of the Academic Council into an effective college decision-making body. The College Act contains a provision for the establishment of an Academic Council and stipulates its membership--representatives from students, faculty, administration, and the community. Its mandate is to make recommendations to the Board on Board matters. Virtually any issue in the institution would be debated under the rubric of "affecting academic matters." The intent is that the Council would debate, analyze, and develop academic policy for recommendation to the Board. Experience under the previous administration led academic staff to be suspicious. Cornish remembers:

> And there was a whole process of having to convince people that that body was going to be seriously used and not manipulated by management. And that took a good period of two to three years of retreats, training, candid behavior, and backing off from a high-profile role myself, and encouraging the people who had tentatively come back to see if this thing was really going to be used the way it should, or if it was going to be managed by senior management.

He invited colleagues he valued from across the province to show his staff how the Council could work from practical and ideal perspectives and actually trained staff, including the president, on working together. The staff agreed that it was wasteful and a duplication of energy for the Academic Council to parallel the administration with committees. It was decided that the Council would trust administration to prepare positions for full debate at Academic Council, "and let Council, then, do the debate on policy rather than the spade work." After some "shaky incidents" the trust was built to the point where Council has no standing committees but only temporary committees which dissolve once they have finished their task. With some pride Cornish related,

> From one perspective that Academic Council decision-making process went through the achievement of some real maturity, and now they're moving, after six years, they're moving now to bite into some fundamental issues in terms of academic policy: the content of programs, the cycle of regular review, what's core in program content, what's minimal, where do basic skills fit. Those issues are all on the agenda for Academic Council right now.

Programs had to be adapted in order to meet the demands of industry and students. Unless the instructional infrastructure was functioning well, the mistrust and lack of cohesion would sabotage and confound all efforts to fulfill the college's mandate.

The values expressed must be manifested in "reality and objectivity" in order to achieve the college's mandate. It is through organizational learning that people's skills and attitudes can be improved, thereby increasing the quality of their interactions--between people within the organization and between people of the college and those in the environment.

Linking with Industry

Formal and informal connections between the college and the rural environment have been historically important and will be explored in the following section. The industrial review had its roots in the program advisory committee and has become pivotal in positioning the college and its programs with the changing environment. Informal linkages between instructors, their respective programs, and industry have been mutually beneficial.

Industrial review - formal. In order to carry out its mandate, the college needed to determine program relevancy from the industry. The tradition for consulting with industry went back 25 years to the first Horticultural Advisory Committee which was, as mentioned earlier, initiated by leaders in the horticultural industry. Subsequent programs followed this success, and eventually all programs had advisory committees. Some committees were indicating that certain programs were not up to par. There were some inherent weaknesses in the advisory process in that some observers felt they could be manipulated by the interior professionals. Initially when programs started up the committees were selected from a broad spectrum of approximately 15 practitioners at differing levels--i.e., senior managers, junior managers, workers, and recent graduates. There was a tendency as the program progressed for people to drop off until, over time, the committee turned into an "Old Boys' Club." In fact, one manager reported that after five or six years, "they [the Advisory Committee] are more resistant to change in a program than our co-ordinators or department heads or deans; I mean, that's their program and, boy . . . ." Department heads in the past had attempted more thorough reviews, but they were difficult to initiate in one's own department. An effort, in order to be effective, had to be "an overall drive," although a very successful response to industry was Hort. Week, a week-long mixture of short courses which was developed 25 years ago and has become an integral part of Olds College. Extension also had a tradition of being very responsive to industry, but not the regular programs.

The fundamental difference between the role of the advisory committee and the role of a review committee is, instead of seeking verification on course content, the review committee answers the question "What do you want produced?" The industrial review process was referred to very often by people interviewed as a major critical incident in the college's development. The whole consultation process with the program review activities "have just been hugely powerful stuff," commented a senior administrator.

Various interviewees described the process in essentially the same manner. A panel of experts, usually between 15 and 18 in number, are selected from a spectrum of industrial activity slightly larger than the program scope. These experts are picked by the instructors, coordinator, and the Dean with a view to providing a really good cross-section of the industry. The panel members volunteer their time for two days, for which they receive expenses. A facilitator is assigned--usually the dean or vice-president--in an attempt to reduce bias. In describing the process, a department head explained: "It's better if your facilitator really has no experience in a particular field, and then it's easier for him to ask questions." The panel is asked what skills graduates would need to have if they came out of Olds College on Friday and began working on Monday. The competencies generated by the subsequent brainstorming session are then recorded and refined into a competence format. A large chart is constructed. Separately, the department generates a list of competencies from the various courses in the actual program, and constructs another chart which is compared to the first. Areas of deficiency and severely overlapping areas are discussed to determine how significant they are. With this information programs are brought more into line with the demands of industry. One instructor emphasized that staff never

> talk to them [the review panel] in terms of courses, because, as educators, that's our job to put them together in curriculum. But they tell us the competencies they want those students to know. So at the end we have a really nice chart, and you can hand it to a student and say, "Okay, when you come out of Olds College, this is what you're going to--these are the tasks that you can perform, or these are the things you can do."

Bigsby is credited by most of the staff interviewed as being the force behind the initiation of these reviews. In response to the question "How did they begin?" he replied:

> It's based on, I guess, my knowledge, Dan's knowledge, our general knowledge that in any institution like this, that that's a truism: If you are an employment-oriented institution, that if you're doing everything right, then it doesn't cost you very much and doesn't take very much time to verify the fact that things are going right.

The first reviews were conducted in the Equine and Farrier program approximately three years ago because the programs were threatened and the Equine faculty and staff perceived a lack of support on campus. A few other programs followed on the success of the first review, and according to one administrator,

> When we started getting some fairly concrete results and started to reflect that in curriculum, all of a sudden people started to realize, hey! there's some interesting things going on here, and it's creating some excitement and some enthusiasm, and given limited resources, if there's going to be any reallocation of resources, those areas that are exciting and people are enthusiastic about are likely to fair better, and suddenly everybody wanted on the bandwagon.

In 1986 a coordinator was appointed to oversee the review process. The coordinator was an educator in whom the faculty had confidence and trust. The administration was very supportive of the industrial reviews, hence funds and resources were made available to ensure their success. Initially there was suspicion that the process might be a disguised evaluation scheme. Some faculty were working without outlines or with outdated ones, and faculty had not discussed how their courses interfaced. In fact, a few instructors had not talked with each other at all as a result of "old wounds." One manager recalls remarking to a group of faculty something to the effect: "In order to make all this work and to revamp your program the way industry says you need to do this, I think you'd better begin to talk to each other."

The strength of the review process is that administration is not making judgement from "the top" about a program or instructor doing a poor job, which, parenthetically, is impossible to ascertain in highly specialized areas. The system is self-adjusting. A senior administrator explained the merits of the process:

> It's also a no-threat way of acquainting people with the fact that we've got some holes in our operation, if in fact industry tells us we've got some holes. It's a way of allowing program managers to save face, to say to themselves, "Oh, my God, I didn't realize that industry had changed that much." And so what industry tell us, then, it's a total win-win situation, because you can bring your teaching content up to current snuff.

The profound benefit of the review approach is that it empowers staff to make decisions at a level which is most appropriate and becomes part of a feedback loop. A high quality of instruction in service to agriculture is the declared mission of the college, and according to a senior administrator, the review is pivotal to fulfilling that mandate:

> It's the absolute building block, it's the foundation stone, the cornerstone, to quality of instruction, because if everybody knows what industry expects the graduates to be able to do, then it all follows as to what you have to teach; and then a good chunk of what you have to teach dictates how you're going to teach it. And when you know what you're going to teach and how you're going to teach it, you know how you're going to evaluate it. And that's full circle. And this takes a while to unfold and to put the building blocks in place. But once you put that first building block in place, you've done 90% of your work.

Up to the time of writing, 22 industrial reviews had been conducted at Olds College. An unprecedented outcome of all the reviews is that all aspects of the agricultural industry are asking for business and interpersonal skills, which in the past had not been considered as important as technical skills. Therefore, the implications are that there are some common core competencies that should be taught collegewide, not just programwide. The college is now in the process of responding by developing core competencies where every graduate is assured of having some basic mathematical, communication, business, and computer skills. Core will be discussed later in the context of academic reorganization.

The second area which industry has identified for improvement is that within the students' area of specialization they should have broad and specific experience. For example, a student may graduate with a Diploma in Horticulture, Turf Grass Specialist. The expectation would be that the Olds College graduate is very familiar with weeds and plants from the growing and business side and, in addition, is on the cutting edge of all aspects of turf grass management.

Therefore, through the program reviews, industry has identified some shortcomings in the preparation of students. A senior administrator poses a rhetorical question which has been the focus of much debate and will be discussed in another section:

> Are we wise enough as a group of professionals here to take that input from industry and package this up in ways that are more meaningful and configurations that are more meaningful than the configuration we're using right now? And the answer to that is already coming out: Yes. Not major shifts; we're doing things not badly. The historical ways of packaging things up have some validity, and so we're not doing things grossly incorrectly, but there's some tweaking that we can easily do.

Industrial linkages - informal. The message faculty was getting from the previous administration was that the priority of the college is teaching: "You can have relationships with industry, but don't let that interfere with your teaching." The present administration urged faculty to forge relationships with their respective industrial areas. Soon after his arrival, Cornish exhorted faculty:

> We're much closer to the institutes of technology, in that sense, than we are to the community college. Now, if it follows that you're an employment-oriented institution, it also follows that you must have extremely strong links with your industry, the industry you serve. They are the absorbers of your graduates. It's they who'll dictate your reputation; either your graduates that they employ are acceptable to them, or they're not.

One faculty member is actively building relationships with manufacturers and dealers of farm equipment and was planning a trip to the head office of a manufacturer in the United States to orient them to Olds College and show them that it is in their best interests to have some of their equipment in the program to which students could be exposed. The intent of this staff member is to "work on all the manufacturers." He mentioned that the department has obtained the use of some very expensive equipment as a result of some strong relationships that have been developed. He continued,

> For example, we've developed a good rapport with Kabota Tractor, and they put a brand new tractor in here every two years. Case International, they put a brand new combine in each year, the largest of their combines. With John Deere, they give us equipment on a three-month loan at a time. Some of the builders of cultivators and disks, they're putting in new disks here regularly.

It is not a one-way street since there are times when instructors help out local dealers when they encounter complex problems. In addition to securing much-needed resources, these healthy relationships help in the placement of graduates.

The most spectacular relationship with industry is the joint-venture project the college has with Greenleaf. This private concern uses state-of-the-art technology in processing the farm's waste through the use of methane digesters and produces bagged fertilizer which is retailed for domestic use. In addition to the financial gains, the plant stands as an on-site reminder of the importance of industrial contacts. "We can put something on campus right here in front of the instructors' eyes where they can maintain a little touch with reality."

The farm is an excellent vehicle for cultivating and maintaining industrial relationships. Each year the farm manager tries to keep on the cutting edge of technology, always introducing new techniques, new methods, new crops, new genetics, and so forth. He encourages the companies who ask if they can be involved, thereby providing opportunities for instructors and students to find out about job prospects and learn the latest techniques. He believes

> that maintains our currency; it maintains our credibility. And that's one of the reasons for getting involved with private industry so closely. I guess I've always seen our role as kind of being the step between the pure research lab bench at the university and the farmer, or the greenhouse operator, or whatever.

The sheep management program is an example of how one relatively small program area can outreach to different elements in the environment. The following are some of the industrial contacts. The college is working in concert with Agriculture Canada in the introduction of the Arcott, a new purebred strand of sheep registered just a year ago. This places the college in a central position between pure research and farming. The college staff have been active in working with local

Alberta breeders in reducing the incidence of Spider Lamb, a serious affliction for sheep. The staff find themselves in networking roles with such groups as the Canadian Sheep Breeders, the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, and local breeders. The staff is active in the Alberta Sheep Breeders' Association and have been very successful in the show circuit with champion college sheep. These activities have enhanced the college's reputation, provided learning and employment opportunities for students, and have provided a rich laboratory for instruction.

Hort. Week, as mentioned, is a very popular week-long mixture of courses which draws in excess of 500 people to the college. The participants are drawn from many areas of the agricultural industry to attend "judging schools and furrow design schools and turf schools and a whole rash of things. And it's probably one of the most successful devices for upgrading the industry that I've ever seen!" exclaimed a department head. Practitioners from agriculture-related activities such as park maintenance, interior landscaping, groundskeeping, and floristry use Hort. Week as a means of keeping in touch with the latest techniques and technology.

In addition, the Career Fair is an occasion when employers from across Alberta set up booths in the new Student Alumni Center to attract students and initiate the interview process. It is an ideal opportunity for representatives of industry, faculty, students, and prospective students to interact.

The foregoing is a sample of the many relationships the college has with its industrial environment. Instructors are encouraged to develop connections with their respective business areas for their mutual benefit. The most important offshoot of these linkages is that the college can keep abreast of industrial developments. The more formal industrial reviews are critical. According to a senior administrator, "They're the driver; that's the driver: the fit of programs with industry. . . . based on what we've got from industry, we've got a pretty darned good feel for what industry needs."

The quality of instruction is tied directly to industrial requirements in an employment-oriented institution, where there is a relatively narrow focus, and a set of readily identifiable skills is being taught. Once these skills have been included in the curriculum, the delivery of instruction becomes the important variable. Faculty must adapt to changing technology; therefore, instructional support is necessary in order to ensure a high quality of instruction.

Instructional Support

Most staff at Olds College are impressed with and are proud of the high priority given to instructional support. Peer support, professional development, instructional design, the farm, the international office, and the Innovative Funds are some of the college's instructional support efforts which have been identified by the staff interviewed. One veteran staff member remarked in reference to professional development, "We used to play at it years ago. . . . now they aren't playing; they mean business." Staff must keep themselves au courant by continually adapting their instruction to the requirements of the rapidly changing workplace in order to produce a marketable graduate. A senior administrator summarized the expectation he had for the kind of learning experience of an Olds College graduate:

> The thing that I really want to do more than anything else is to zero in on the competencies, that just the sheer quality of the learning experience that the students leave here with, and that's the feeling that they've gotten from Olds College what they came for, their ability to deliver to an employer as much cutting-edge knowledge, technically and with the people and human skills, as they possibly can. So if our students can leave with those two things, be able to give to an employer the best, so that the employers come back and say, "Holy [mackerel]! Olds College graduates are the tops!"

A department head related that some instructors "still teach the new technology the way they taught the old technology." Some people had become "a little comfortable and complacent." Another mentioned that they had hired some "key people with tremendous technical skills" who had never taught before. The only preparation they had before entering the classroom was a two-day orientation on how to instruct and how to prepare a lesson plan. In addition to technical skills, an instructor also needs good instructional skills. A faculty member stated, "We feel to survive now and to be a successful instructor, you need to have both; you can't survive with one alone." Many instructors at Olds College were hired from industry at the apprenticeship or journeyman level or from university with strong academic credentials but no instructional skills. Students were complaining, "Sometimes I'm tested on things you didn't emphasize." Some students have expressed their concerns to administration that they are not getting the best out of some instructors.

Instructors are effusive in their praise for the efforts to support the instructional process with funding, leadership, innovation, techniques, and technology in the Instructional Design area to upgrade the instructional capability. A faculty member reported that administration has "treated us like front-line people . . . so we have the support we need to manage change. It's continual change, and we're pretty proud of how we manage change here at Olds College." An instructor mentioned the clerical support for projects as an asset which included a graphic artist, technician, printing, and duplicating: "We've had the picky administrative chores done for us. We don't have to be involved in counselling. We help the students out where we can, but a small percentage of our time is taken up with administrative, picky chores."

The identification of skill deficits for development can be threatening and must be handled delicately. The industrial reviews were exposing deficits in courses which technically competent instructors have built from their knowledge level, which they teach and evaluate without the checks and balances inherent in the public school system. On the other hand, instructors who have Education degrees may feel defensive if offered a two-month course in an instructional skill area. Instructional improvement must be broached sensitively.

Therefore, the administrative position is absolutely supportive of instructional improvement, which they believe could be tainted by punitive measures. A senior administrator summed up the approach:

> This can only be done in a helpful way; there is no way that it can be done in a punitive way. It's got to be all carrot, and there's got to be no stick. As a matter of fact, even one person, if the word goes out, could go off on that. . . . And so you have to be extremely circumspect even in hinting that somebody isn't doing a good job.

The president conceptualizes professional development as an investment and feels that staff or faculty member energy being given to keeping up with change is not an expendable commodity: "You can't just keep drawing soil from the land; you have to invest back into it." Learning takes investment. If faculty members are going to learn to respond to international demands or new strategies for students or learn in more flexible ways, one requires resources to help instructors analyze needs and prepare various approaches to delivery. An instructor felt strongly that the role of administrator is to generate ideas and "really to throw them at you" because "we're the people on the firing line" who can judge the success. She continued,

> So it really does come down to us. And as well, I think it's really important that the administration realize that their pride and goal has to also be to help us, because we're going to be able to see the problems--again because we're on the firing line--and then we should be able to filter that up to them and have something happen about it.

Cornish stresses the fundamental issue in supporting change in instructional delivery:

> Well, that takes resource input, and I think in the past we've been struggling along expecting people to do all the things they were doing in the past, and also cope with change at the same time. And I think part of the commitment to human resource development and training is a recognition that you've got to invest resources to help people learn new skills and find new knowledge.

Professional development activity at Olds College is part of its tradition. Birdsall (1975) referred to the initial efforts to upgrade pedagogical skills in 1971 when the college moved from Agriculture to the jurisdiction of the Department of Advanced Education. The former administration had initiated sabbaticals and the Innovative Fund. The Cornish administration has made staff development a top priority and has facilitated the development of a comprehensive plan which encompasses the whole college. One department head ironically remarked that the administration was the last one to take advantage of the scheme: "Management is like a doctor: You take care of everybody but yourselves, and that quite often happens."

The professional development fund is substantial compared to that of other colleges, and, according to the president, it will be a priority item in the budget for next year. Staff submit proposals to a jointly administered professional development committee. Suggestions for workshops can be forwarded to the committee. For example, in response to faculty requests, short seminars were offered in May and June on such topics as how to set course objectives and how to deal with troubled students. Major workshop leaders and speakers such as David Ellis, author of the Master Student Program, are retained for Spring presentations to faculty.

A department head sent four instructors to the Vancouver Vocational Institute to pursue a two-month program in instructional pedagogy. He explained the arrangement:

> They are using their own time, so that much of it's of their own volition, but of course the accommodation, the meals, everything is paid for, and the tuitions, but it's those instructors that tend to be the more leading-edge instructors and are trying to pick up those extra skills.

These instructors, in turn, become a resource for other instructors in the department. It varies from department to department, but one instructor indicated her preference for peer consultants where her colleagues help each other in class, particularly in the "hands on" areas. She reported openness to having her peers watch her teach and vice versa.

The sabbatical is seen to be an excellent vehicle for staff renewal. People interviewed felt the ideal would be to get people out of here every five years for a year to do something different, to get a new perspective. One faculty member indicated he was one of the first recipients of a sabbatical at 80% of his salary in 1980. He is proud of the improvement in staff development projects since then, which he feels is very generous, and referred to it as "a remarkable change."

> We've been able to keep up to manage change simply by the input of funds into staff development, professional development. It's been great! We've been very fortunate. You look at our counterparts in the Department of Agriculture: They can hardly get permission to travel within the province! And here we're not only able to travel the continent, but off the continent, and we're into international now and that's starting to pay off.

Typically, people throughout the college gave testimony to the emphasis the organization places on professional development. One divisional head whose department budgeted 10% of their resources to professional development told an exceptional story of a new employee of two weeks whom they funded $1,500 to attend a conference in Spokane. It was clear the individual was going to learn something valuable, so the request was granted. This department budgets $2,000 per person per year, which is indicative of the high priority accorded professional development.

Similarly, in another department a manager said she had been at the college three weeks or less when she was sent on professional staff development. She felt that if one could identify a project which is consistent with one's goals and objectives, not necessarily directly related to one's job but within one's career, it would likely be approved. This applies to all staff, she stressed. Her secretary was going that week for professional development. She commented,

> And I find that very refreshing, because I get a sense that we may recruit very well to a position, but because the college is changing and because our student base is changing and our clients are changing, that we need to also maintain--maintain's a bad word--to be able to increase our knowledge on how we can meet their needs.

The Instructional Design Department, a recent initiative of the administration, was extended to provide in-house assistance to faculty on matters of pedagogy. The industrial reviews are coordinated out of that department. Instructional Design provides faculty with assistance in developing questionnaires, needs assessments, consultations on course objectives, and offers courses on different aspects of pedagogy. Over the period of this study they were in the process of preparing orientation sessions to the use of the Scantron, a computer-scoring machine for objective testing.

Theoretically, the department was designed to show teachers how to teach, but it was encountering some growing pains. The end of the review-course objectives-instructional delivery cycle is evaluation and testing, a critical element in the teaching process. The administration had agreed to fund $50,000 to finance a resident testing and assessment expert. This idea had met heavy resistance from some areas. A department head related the feeling of some of his instructors who thought the money could be designated to better use. The department head was ambivalent as well:

> That's good support, yes. The instructors don't think that yet. We're going out and getting the $50,000 grant to help them with examinations. For God's sake, I've been writing exams for 20 years! We don't need this kind of a guy. We need more help down in my classroom; we need another instructor. I agree with them verbally, but on a mental basis I think it's not a bad one.

The feeling of some is that things are moving too fast and that faculty will come to the conclusion that they need evaluation support once they gain more confidence in the area. The administration perspective is to teach faculty to help themselves. If instructors require a "fancy overhead," they can be taught to make it themselves. The presenting problem is that with the pressure of workloads, people claim that they do not have the time. Some are advocating a slower "service approach" to produce materials for faculty and gradually introducing them to self-sufficiency. The issue remains unresolved.

The College Farm. Olds College has its roots in the demonstration farm. "This college wouldn't be what it is if it didn't have the farm," declared a faculty member. Another instructor echoed the sentiment:

> I suspect the farm was a sacred cow for many years, and whether it was used the best way it should have been or not, there was nobody that was going to question the existence of the farm, because how could you have an agricultural college without a farm?

Over the years the College Farm fell behind developing technology and modern agricultural practice. It "did not keep up appearancewise" in the eyes of the alumni, students, or industry. The original concept was that the "model" farm was something students could emulate when they got back to their farms.

The College Farm has been updated as a result of an infusion of capital funds--the fruit of Cornish's fundraising efforts. About four years ago staff and administration had recognized that the cost of the College Farm was prohibitive, especially since it was not being used as an "actual hands-on laboratory." They began a serious review and long-term planning to upgrade the quality of the College Farm from a production orientation. A manager explained, "If we had a good production model, then we could easily say to the instructor, 'Here is a good production model. You no longer have to drive fifty miles to look at a good production model; there is one here.'" A consulting firm was retained to assess the farm from the perspective of the agricultural and educational communities.

Presently the College Farm is a 1,200-acre enterprise with dairy and beef herds, horses, swine, sheep, a prototypical waste-handling system, feed crops, and modern buildings and equipment. Overall, according to the farm manager, it ranks in the top 25% of operating farms in Alberta. In some areas, such as sheep production, the College Farm is in the top 5%, as it is with the computerized dairy operation. With regard to the College Farm's impact on students, the farm manager felt reactions would vary:

> Some, it'll be just a tremendous eye opener, and others, we get students from very progressive operations, very progressive farms and companies, and they're going to be more interested in the business aspect and the research aspect, as opposed to the daily production and husbandry things that they'll gain here.

Instructors have been made more accountable for their relationship to and their use of the College Farm. Several instructors are actively involved in the management of the College Farm, and they have been given responsibility to increase the use of the farm by students. Over the last six years the operation has been turned around so that the number of student hours has increased sixfold.

The farm manager indicated that he had reported to six or seven people, including the president, in his first eight years at the college. Approximately four years ago the College Farm became part of the academic sector reporting to the Academic Vice-President. The idea was to change the concept of the College Farm's operation from an autonomous, "free-floating" activity to an instructional support service, a "living laboratory" not unlike the library. The farm manager brought with him a philosophy which he articulated: "We're here to provide a service. The students come first. We have to be careful not to forget why we're here,and that's because of the students."

The College Farm was challenged to be self-sufficient. Until very recently the College Farm had been a great drain on resources--approximately $300,000. "Instead of money coming into the college from the farm, it's all going out!" exclaimed an administrator. Part of the expenses--$200,000--was considered the cost of instruction. The present college board is committed to having operational costs, beyond the costs of instruction, recovered by farm production, thus placing great pressure on the farm manager. He admitted that it was very tough for him to "juggle production and instruction." Costs of production and costs of instruction have been identified and assigned to their respective areas. "It's been a real struggle to juggle those two aspects," he reported. An instructor pointed out the difficulty in that the College Farm "is a major part of the classroom here at the college." And students are gaining skills; therefore, they cannot be expected to perform at the level of a skilled person; therefore, farm efficiency and subsequent revenue are lowered.

In addition to production and instruction, the College Farm, as a "living laboratory," is used for testing management and production techniques. These initiatives are taken in keeping with the following excerpts from the Olds College 1986 Mission Statement (see Appendix 5): **"Olds College will strive, through involvement with demonstration and field testing, to infuse its learning environment with the application of agricultural technology from broad, yet appropriate, sources."**

Faculty submit their proposals to the Staff Farm Committee, who judge the feasibility of the project. As mentioned in the Industrial Linkages section, these activities are conducted in collaboration with agricultural agencies and businesses. A sample of the 14 applied research projects conducted in 1985 are Grain Rewetting, Vegetable Varietal Trials, Turfgrass Culture Trials, and the Effect of Lighting on Weaner Pigs' Gain, with the support of the following respective cooperative agencies: Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Horticultural Research Centre, and Alberta Golf Association.

Staff and students were proud of the College Farm and viewed it as an integral part of the college. They saw it as a showpiece, symbolic of the essence of Olds College. From an instrumental perspective, the farm acts as a sensor to the environment, as it provides a critical connection with agricultural research efforts, on one hand, and new developments in the farm industry, on the other.

The Learning Assistance Center. Instructors have identified the Learning Assistance Center as a useful resource. Increasingly, students with academic skill deficits are admitted to programs. These deficits seriously retard students' progress. Many programs do not have prerequisites. "If you're one of the first seventy-two that apply, you're in," stated one instructor. Students with academic deficiencies can take a reduced courseload and follow a specially designed program in the Center. Some departments do a periodic review of students to identify areas of weakness. A faculty member explained how her department handles students with skill deficits:

> We found some students have some unique problems, are very strong academically except for, say, mathematics, and we send them over there and they meet with the Learning Assistance Center manager, and he puts them on a math module program, and they work at their own rate on computer over there learning some math skills. And we've got some for Communications and for different subjects.

One instructor confessed that students who have serious deficits are better off in the Learning Assistance Center than in their program since "you've got to learn your math and how to read sometime in life." Some faculty admit to not being trained to teach basic subjects and are relieved to "have the pressure taken off," as one instructor stated.

> Let's face it, I'm an engineer. I'm not into teaching people the very, very basic math or spelling. I can spell, but I can't teach anybody how to spell, sort of thing. So it's nice to have them to fall back on.

The Learning Assistance Center is part of Student Services and is staffed by a professional and an instructional assistant. It was a senior administrator's idea to develop the Center, and it has proven to be a valuable support for staff and students.

The Innovative Project Fund. The Innovative Project Fund was started in the early 1980s and has been a popular source of funds for faculty. The Fund is formed from the revenue generated by instructional activities of a fee-for-service nature, such as the farrier's horseshoeing or mechanical repairs of farm equipment. These resources, instead of "disappearing into the general deep hole" of general revenue, are placed in a special fund and are accessed by instructors who wish to try something new. In the following case Innovative Project Funds are used in conjunction with staff development, as outlined by an instructor who related his experience:

> That was a pilot project [development of the specialty mushroom growing]. We needed a course that would have good appeal with the public, and now we're teaching it as a seventy-hour course to regular students. We're offering two of those courses to the public. And by having staff development training and Innovative Project Funds, for instance, they sent me to L.A. twice, to Hollywood twice, to learn how to produce videos, because these courses for the Home Study student have to have a video, instructional video, so they can see the movements of the practical work in an effective way so that they can participate in the hands-on, because we have a long-standing policy for hands-on education. So now the courses that go to Home Study people have a video with their study modules. The modules have been around for a long time, but the fact that now

> we can reach any student anywhere, as long as they have a VCR, makes it very nice, indeed, and it was that kind of support that allowed that to happen.

The testimony above illustrates how cutting-edge instructional technology can be achieved through the creative use of resources. "We can do things we never dreamed before," attested an instructor who had one project which was funded $7,000.

The International Department. The International Department was "another one of the things that Bigsby and Cornish dreamed up together" approximately five years ago, recounted an administrator. He recounted:

> The whole purpose of our International Department is to do faculty development; that's its mandate. Its mandate is not to get international contracts; it's to do faculty development, and the way it does it is by getting international contracts. So instead of the contracts becoming the end, they become a means to another end.

The exposure to different cultures and techniques is useful in broadening faculty perspectives. There are many foreign students at Olds College, and instructors have found it useful to have an insight into what "Third World" really means. The instructors report that their experiences abroad have been, in part, a compensation for service to the college. They also feel that there is a great renewal factor in visiting very different cultures. Upon their return they are more appreciative of the support instructors in Alberta have.

Olds instructors have taught in Africa, Asia, and Central America. Through the interview period a dean was in Nicaragua, three instructors were in Korea, and the academic vice-president had left for Thailand. A faculty member speculated that within five years every long-term employee would have been on one international contract. The kinds of courses taught, for example, involve mushroom growing, microcomputers, farm management, and meat cutting.

While it is fun and exciting, teaching abroad is hard work. An instructor reflected on his experience:

> You've got to know how to bow to the right people; there's protocol issues that come up; you have to work with interpreters; you have no library at your disposal, English language, there's no computers. I mean, there's nothing there. I mean, it's hard work.

Another aspect of the International Department which is hard work on the part of faculty and administration is the development of the proposals, for which departments and individuals are not compensated. The college is considering the establishment of a proposal-writing fund in an attempt to minimize the negative effects.

Another by-product of the international initiative is that Olds College's name is "being spread far afield." "So we've got our tentacles out, if you will, all over the world from this little college. . . . We can make a valuable contribution there [Third World] if we can help them to manage their agriculture more efficiently and feed their people better." The people of Olds College are proud of their international program.

The faculty give "great credit" to Bigsby and Cornish for putting a "tremendous amount of emphasis" on faculty development. Their investment in faculty has enabled staff to begin to acquire the necessary skills to keep in pace with the rapidly changing environment.

This was an important chapter in The Story of Olds College, as it describes the philosophy and leadership style of the president and his administration. Of particular note is the unique and effective manner in which he and his vice-president complement each other.

The CRISP College process and ensuing mandate were of vital importance for the destiny of the college, as the mission became the rallying cry around which the staff coalesced. However, the mandate and the agricultural milieu presented special challenges to the college's marketing initiatives.

Linking with industry was a major initiative for the instructional division. Departments could self-adjust to the requirements and developments in their respective areas of industry. Feedback from industry had significant implications for the instructional staff as they became aware of some shortcomings. In order to accommodate the change which was being introduced by the agricultural environment through the industrial reviews, faculty needed to change their orientation. Instructional support, which included a comprehensive faculty development program, became a top priority for the administration. The industrial reviews provided the incentives for changes in the college's approach to instructional delivery, which is the theme of the next chapter as The Story of Olds continues.

Chapter 7

Instructional Delivery: Adapting Programs to Industry

Under the strong academic leadership of Dr. Bigsby, the college programs, through the industrial reviews, were coordinated with the needs of industry. The reviews pointed to weaknesses in the college's instructional delivery, in that the requirements of agriculture were not necessarily arranged in the same way that the college was structured. The agricultural programs were discipline rather than service focussed. The requirements of industry cut across the traditional course offerings, which had implications for program integration, the development of core, and structural reorganization of instruction. Reactions to potential realignment of courses were not all positive, and it was seen as a threat to some.

Academic Leadership

Bigsby reflected back to why he thought he was hired and expressed that he might not have been as patient as Cornish in waiting two years to assess personnel before taking action. He commented:

> I suspect I was consciously chosen for this position because of my experience and a bit of my track record in terms of not tolerating ambiguity too well. I like to have things reasonably clean, and I don't mind taking some decisions. And I think that I was probably selected into the position because my personality is not unlike Dan's, although I probably wouldn't have waited the two years. Which, as it turns out, I think was very, very wise of Dan.

Staff credit Bigsby with being an inspirational leader who is "full of lots of ideas." He was referred to as a "critical linchpin" in that he was considered to be a very competent educational administrator who was interested in providing "relevant, competency-based education" in the area of agriculture. His experience with the DACUM process, a system for establishing competencies, proved important, as it was a useful mechanism in keeping up with what industry was doing. By "doing," getting industry, deans, and faculty together, a critical mass was generated which one staff member referred to as "genius planning" or a "lot of coincidence." Regardless, the power of the industrial reviews was "magical and bizarre." A department head stated that the initiative to conduct the industrial reviews had to come from senior administration and had to be "an overall drive" because the department heads would have encountered insurmountable resistance.

The administration encouraged department heads and deans to mingle with faculty in staff rooms and drink coffee. Rather than send memos, it was suggested that managers make face-to-face contact. One senior administrator commented:

> That's not really a complicated issue, but that was one of the management techniques. For lack of a better term, that we were encouraged and told to do, which was to go out and listen to people. Now, that's not all that terribly revolutionary, but it did flow out of the desire to improve what we were doing.

Another administrator complimented the senior management on their support and empowerment. Impediments were removed, and the message was sent that in order to be the best agricultural college in Western Canada, staff should "'go out and do,'" recalled an administrator. He continued, "'We'd like you to do it as soon as possible within the rules, but if you can bend the rules without breaking them, by all means, go ahead and do that.'" Bigsby believes in what appears to be a contradiction that "the more you give away, the more you get." This credo applies not only in terms of authority or management position, but also in terms of programmatic activity. Programs have been released to Fairview College, Lakeland College, and the Calgary Vocational Center. For example, the Extension Department developed an academic upgrading program which they handed over to the Calgary Vocational Center to operate. The program fell within the Vocational Center's mandate; therefore, they were given it to administer even though the program is conducted at Olds College. "We became more powerful by doing it." Bigsby believes one has to be cautious,

> but we have to have the confidence amongst ourselves at Olds College to say, "Ah, take it! Yes! We developed, we've used it, you guys have it, because you've got students out there, too." We don't need to hold that in and say, "No, you can't have it."

Program Integration

In the fall of 1985 the college went through "a fairly major reorganization" where some "islands of departments" around campus were broken down and reassembled. According to a dean,

> Introducing fewer department heads and some new dean positions was to try to facilitate that, was to try and put a couple of departments under the control of a dean so that we could start getting some cohesiveness and some college direction as opposed to individual-department kind of direction and focus.

Departments tended to be organized around disciplines and were located in separate buildings around campus. Subject matter-oriented needs were, under this orientation, met very well, but more recently the industrial reviews have identified interdisciplinary needs which the current structure "really did not deal with that well," explained a staff member. Communication and decision making within the discipline area were effective, but interdepartmental relationships suffered. There was a "low ebb" in departmental interaction from 1982 to 1984. The problem of departmental isolation still lingers. A senior administrator explains:

> We have something called geography here; we've got turf, where there's a commonality of a building and a commonality of a set of programs that generally go on in that building. We have an item that runs absolutely counter to turf, and that is something that you might call the need to integrate or to work our students across buildings and across the system, so that the students don't identify as being Land Sciences students or Ag. Mech. students; they're Olds College students.

He continued to describe the opposing forces which influence the development of a structure. Two kinds of core competencies were required: first, a general set of skills which involve computers and business and interpersonal abilities in every Olds graduate regardless of the program; and second, a specific area of technical competence or expertise. The discipline forces the organization to specificity and potential isolationism, while the industrial requirements influence the college to a more integrated, general direction. If the college is to adapt to industry, the walls around disciplines must crumble.

Instructors gave examples of industrial requirements for integration. For example, horticultural students "hired on at a golf course" may be well prepared in theory of turfgrass management, but if they do not know how to drive or maintain a lawnmower, their value to the employer is limited. Agriculture Mechanics students should be able to use a computer. Horticulture students need to know how to operate a half-ton or a Bobcat, which is part of the Agriculture Mechanics program. Students obtain chemical knowledge of the spraying process in Plant Science, yet the application rates are done through calibration, which is the purview of Agriculture Mechanics. A department head recognizes the need for overlapping programs:

> That needs to be addressed more, and some joint courses put on. Traditionally up till now we've sort of each gone our own way, but I think philosophically that's changing, and, again, that's part of the mentality shift that's happening at the college.

The importance of integration has been recognized by other college functions such as the farm and extension. The farm manager has witnessed "a definite shift." When he came to the college eleven years ago,

> it was "we" and "them" and "us" and "they" and "the farm" and "the rest" and "the instructional staff" and "the farm." There was very little integration between what went on in the classroom on a daily basis and what went on in the farm enterprises on a daily basis.

And now the farm is integrated into the various instructional programs. The Dean of Extension claimed that his division had very few connections with the rest of the college when he arrived three years ago. They were a department unto their own. He observed, "The college was divided into buildings and into programs. . . . there were empires here, and that certainly has changed. The entire institution has undergone, for lack of a better word, some kind of melding."

Integration was achieved largely based on the introduction of three deans by senior administration. Departmental authority was reduced, and some administrative responsibility shifted from department heads to deans. The deans were charged with the responsibility to look out to industry and to link across various programs. One department head found that innovation and planning was off-loaded to the deans, and his function involved evaluating instructors, building budget, taking care of facilities, and authorizing purchases. He expressed some dissatisfaction with his new role: "I'm not so sure I'm too happy with my job at the present moment; you know, you're a paper pusher. So I've gone back into a little bit of teaching to keep my sanity." One interviewee commented that it would have been very difficult to initiate change if they had not put the deans' positions into place. He observed that the deans had little difficulty communicating because of their overarching responsibilities. In the words of a dean, they became "islands of neutrality" which enhanced communication. The college had just experienced "very strained" negotiations between faculty and administration prior to the insertion of the deans' positions three years ago, and

> having come through that period, everybody was looking for something better, and consequently enough of this fell into place that, in the last negotiations, they really took place at a level which showed a lot more trust and a lot more active listening going on and a lot more participation and resolution of the problems on each side of the fence. So it takes some catalyst to initiate change, but then it has to be a whole lot of other things that have to be right before it can take place.

In addition to establishing the three deans to facilitate internal communication and strong linkages with the industry, as mentioned earlier, the farm was included in the academic division. The farm became an instructional laboratory as opposed to being a separate enterprise. It became part of the academic system of the college. Further, Extension was also shifted into the academic area from its former Division of Student Services. The rationale was that the Continuing Education (C.E.) people should be tied in with the academics, since "the major focus of the C.E. Department is to provide the part-time non-credit education which parallels or mirrors the full-time activity," described an informant. Academic Council still manages the academic standards of instruction in Extension. The administration of Extension oversees the financial, physical plant, marketing, and promotional aspects of the operation.

The foregoing modification to the academic organizational structure was made in 1985 and has remained intact and is currently being reviewed in response to a recent reorganization proposal by Bigsby. These adjustments to academic structure have been adaptive to the recommendations from industry.

Proposal for a New Academic Organization

The organizational structure which was described earlier and emanated from CRISP College may be difficult to improve upon; regardless, Bigsby proposed a new structure which has met some resistance. The intent of the proposal was that it would serve as a position paper to which staff could react. He had not formally consulted with faculty, as this was merely a draft which would serve as a point of departure. The proposal had incorporated suggestions from the industrial reviews and had at its focus the establishment of core competencies which challenged some traditional practices. The emerging configuration which would represent "the best fit of a program-to-program" meant the collapse and reorganization of some divisions.

Prior to 1985 there was a single dean, now a vice-president, and because of the geography of Olds College, departmental chairmen, now called department heads, managed each building or "satellite unit." Four deans were introduced in 1985. One observer commented that there were

> the three kind of academic deans, two on the Ag. side, one on the Support Services side; and then the fourth dean on the Extension side. Now, the reality of that is that we've got about a half a layer too many in that management structure.

The academic leadership is currently examining the entire management structure to determine a way of rationalizing the organization or a way that makes more sense. Faculty, faculty coordinators, department heads, deans, and the vice-president have identified approximately 30 concerns that they are going to address which were part of what Bigsby's proposed organization had intended to resolve (see Appendix 6). This committee was struck only after heavy resistance had been encountered on the part of affected areas.

One manager gave his perspective on the events surrounding the academic reorganization proposal. He thought that faculty perceive that the primary objective of the instructional reorganization is to "flatten the organization." A few faculty in an affected division see a "hidden agenda" to get rid of their dean and to reduce liberal arts at Olds College, a position which will be explored later. The manager explained further that the industry reviews indicated that the organization needed to be more responsive to allow for mobility between courses and programs so that majors could be created or dropped. He stated that, in reality:

> what's happened is that underneath this whole process is the traditional organization of our programs, and people seeing themselves tied to those programs and trying to defend their area within those programs is basically what's driving this instructional reorganization, as opposed to either the vision of what's happening in the industrial reviews.

Enclaves of resistance to the original plan articulated by Bigsby have tended to represent the status quo by clinging to traditional groupings. One observer cynically stated that the college will have a new organization "because we've gone through the exercise," but it will be innocuous in that it will not address the original objectives. He claimed that the reorganization has

> sort of gone off the rails, in my mind. It could be temporarily. I think within this process it's gone off, and I think in order for it to rehappen it's going to maybe bubble up again or that sort of thing.

He observed further that "we will have a reorganized academic structure in here that will occur more for the saving of face than for the achieving of value or the reaching of objectives."

As mentioned earlier, the original reorganization paper was intended to be a draft proposal, but the reaction was immediate and forceful. There was a "big uproar," and people said, "Here they are. They're dumping it on us again." The mistrust of the past surfaced in some areas, and pockets of resistance emerged. One interviewee commented:

> The fallout from what was perceived as a laid-on was so great that basically it was dumped, creating what's coming up from underneath, the people who are in that process do not have the vision any more, what they see as their own particular needs and things they need to defend.

A faculty member felt that it was time "to reshuffle some things" but that the proposal did not go through the consultation process and therefore "was very poorly delivered." In response to the strong and "immediate backlash," the administration launched an extensive consultation process. As mentioned above, 30 items of concern have been identified which have been clustered around the following five topic areas: Quality of Instruction, Quality of Programs, Organizational Structure and Communication, Marketing and Advertising, Plan/Vision/Mandate. Joint administration-faculty committees have been established for each theme. Many faculty compliment the administration for not imposing a structure. In the words of one faculty member,

> So our management is more than willing to listen to us. I know they wanted something new in place by Christmas, and then as soon as they saw that everybody really didn't like what they'd done, and they decided to take a step back and get this whole group together to work at it again, the timelines kind of went, "Oh, well, next spring will be okay." So that's good.

Staff feel confident the consultation process is being handled well. A staff member felt that the problems that exist on campus are not due to organizational structure and implied that attitudes had to change. She continued, "I think that there's still a strong feeling that this shuffling may not be the answer, because it's been done before."

Another staff member recalled with some frustration that within a few years the library has reported to four different positions, which has been disruptive. At one point the library reported to the Chairman of the Learning Resource Centre, which changed, directly reporting to the vice-president, then to the Dean of Student Services, and, finally, to the Dean of Academic and Support Services. She concluded, "As far as the library is concerned, we would just as soon there weren't any more changes, because it seems that you sort of start from a point and you work up again."

The Division of Academic and Support Services was the area which was to be disassembled and redistributed in the original proposal. The dean's position was intended to be reduced to that of a department head. Bigsby's proposal called for two deans: a Dean of Agricultural Sciences and a Dean of Agricultural Production. The faculty in the division were very upset and anticipated the Balkanization of their department. A dean explained his perspective:

> You have to realize that perception when you get to faculty is everything, that what they feel is happening is that their jobs will be distributed around the organization. So in Engineering you'll have a Communications guy and a Human Relations guy. But break up the whole department is what they think is going to happen.

Some informants expressed the view that there were two secret agendas inherent in the reorganization document. These were to eliminate the dean's position and to degrade the liberal arts area. The dean was under pressure and naturally felt quite threatened, although he has tried very hard not to be viewed as undermining the change process. Members of the division see a contradiction in splitting up the area which contains the life-long skills of communication, business, and computers, which have been identified as important by the industrial review. Most of the programs in the Division of Academic and Support Services were non-agricultural and therefore felt threatened, given the agricultural mandate. They frequently had to be reassured that their programs were not threatened. Members of faculty had written letters of support for the division to remain unchanged. Through the interview period the consultation process had not been completed and the division had not been reorganized.

The rationale for the academic reorganization was to break down some traditional enclaves which had been established around a discipline focus. The industrial reviews had sent a clear message that the configuration of instructional delivery did not reflect the requirements in the field. Further, flexibility was required so that courses could be modified without having to be bound by the Department of Advanced Education's program approval process. Clearly, significant shifts from the status quo were destined to be perceived as a threat by some. The perception of disenfranchisement of those in non-agricultural programs is real and will be explored later. However, the common thread throughout the academic organization is to align programs and courses so that they can most effectively provide qualified graduates for industry. A vital instrument within the academic sector to provide an efficient and effective response to demands from agribusiness is the Extension Department, the topic for the upcoming section.

The Extension Initiative

The Extension Department was initiated as a result of the CRISP activity. The document identified that part-time learners, non-credit learners, learners at a distance, and all those who were not being served out of the base program area in agriculture needed an instructional delivery system. The former Continuing Education Department offered a broad spectrum of courses reminiscent of a community college. Therefore, given the new mandate, the department had to change. The dean described the division's direction:

> The president and the vice-president and the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors said that we will change the C.E. Department, and it will relate to the rest of the college academically, and it will provide an outreach arm for the college, and it will be the focus for some of the development and research activities for the college. It will be an innovative focus.

Thus the department was given its mandate to develop within resources it had to generate for itself.

The two forces which shaped the development of the Extension Department were the industrial review process and program development of needed courses. Full-time faculty and programs were forced to change as a result of the industrial reviews. Courses which were valuable in such areas as the Farrier, Equine, and Dairy programs were located in Extension, which allied that department with academic departments. Since the courses fell outside regular programming, Extension could charge the full amount and therefore use resources more effectively. In the words of Cornish:

> If we had a ton of free resources we'd likely dump them into Extension, and it would have then gotten created as some kind of a foster child of the organization out doing its own thing; having to struggle has forced Extension back into the departments.

Many of the people interviewed identified the development of the Extension Department as a critical incident at Olds College. The success of the department was attributed to the entrepreneurial skills of its dean, who was referred to as "gung-ho" and a "real go-getter." Bigsby and Cornish hold much promise for "the college outside the college." They envisage Extension as a crucial vehicle in adapting the college. Changing enrolment patterns of students can be addressed without "destroying us internally." A whole new college can be created called Extension. Bigsby made an outstanding prediction:

> We put a dean there, and it's my prediction that that college, that dean, is going to be as big and important as all of the rest of our one- and two-year programs put together within five years. That's how much I believe in that one. So that's another significant aspect of change.

Program delivery within a changing environment means that one cannot alienate that environment. "You've got to stay in tune with it," stated the Extension dean. He stressed the importance of examining the points of convergence and removing the points of divergence. The dean conceptualizes the industry and the academic program as two environments:

> There's the external and there's the internal one. Each one of those things is very important. We've got to be in tune with the marketplace; we've got to be in tune with the institution. We've got to maintain kind of a harmonic balance between the two. We've got to be working together, because we can get so much more done together than we can separately. Once you've got that, then you get into your market plan, you get into your business plans, you get into your strategic management, and then you can start leaning towards goals.

The Department of Advanced Education has no money for new programs. Any changes in academic programming beyond the 21 approved programs must be financed by the colleges themselves. Part of the rationale for an academic reorganization is to provide opportunities to open and to close programs in response to demands from industry without seeking approval from Edmonton. This can be accomplished by reclustering programs into large generic groupings within which individual programs can be initiated and terminated without having to consult Advanced Education. The Extension Department becomes instrumental in future academic planning, since, as an administrator viewed the problem:

> we can't get money for new programs, but we feel we need to take this program and massage it a little bit, move it out into an Extension area, but still be able to meet the needs of industry and our students without having to go back to Edmonton and say, "We need more program money."

The Extension tradition. The history of Extension at Olds College goes back 25 years to when Hort. Week was developed in response to industry. The C.E. efforts were within the control of the different college departments, and therefore the quality of the program varied accordingly. One veteran department head remembered the Extension courses:

> I don't know, I ran about 8 or 10 of them at one time, and you were the scourge of the earth. I was told to get my damn assessors and appraisers out of the residence, because one guy got drunk, and he dropped a cigarette in a mattress and damned near burnt the place down. But you had to have all the--supply all the services. Hell, you booked everything yourself; there wasn't any Extension. It was kind of a loose-knit thing, and there was lots of holes in it, lots of holes in it.

However, eventually a coordinator was hired. He did not have a budget and had to use persuasion to wrestle extension activity from department heads who resented his intrusion and became "huffy." The senior department head continued, "Here he was taking away all our precious little gems, and he was starting to make some sense out of them." Every time he made a mistake--for example, when he ordered buses--"all hell would break loose" as the faculty would berate him. One faculty member remembered that revenue from Extension went into the "big deep hole" of the general budget, although departments received "artificial credit." This practice was discontinued when the coordinator retired in 1984. As mentioned, his successor, the current dean, has the mandate to generate revenue to cover his own expenses.

When the Dean of Extension started approximately four years ago, the department was composed of six people, and there are presently 19 people, of which four positions are base funded. He indicated that 15 people are working in "a realm of cost recovery." Many of these are coordinators who are assigned to departments and are hired on a contract basis, i.e., their salaries come from revenue they generate.

The dean stated that when he first arrived the focus in the C.E. Department was to provide community-based education. He defined the college community as being within a 30-minute drive of Olds, which includes 20,000 people, an insufficient population to be effective. An estimated cost of $400,000 was drawn from the base funds. His first move was a shift from the general interest focus to agriculturally related courses. He then counselled a person out of a job and moved the control of the facilities-booking function to Student Services, since most facility functions related to the residence. The Early Childhood Development training program was discontinued, since "we were spending twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars a year on that program, and we weren't getting anywhere near a tenth of the cost back in terms of tuition."

Measures of success. Within the first six to eight months of his appointment, the dean had redistributed responsibilities and had developed a three-year plan. It is important to note that his contract was not permanent; he was on a six-month appraisal basis and "established a principle" that his pay would be based on his performance, which provided an excellent example to his staff. He reached the three-year objective in one and a half years. In three years enrollments have doubled from 3,500 to 7,000. "We've gone upscale" from general courses for $35 to Cattle Marketing, which costs $350 for a one-week course. The dean described the change in quality:

> We're providing higher-level, more complex, more costly courses. Our numbers have started to stabilize, but the average price that people paid--when I got here the average price was somewhere around thirty-five dollars, I think; in fact, I know it was around thirty-five dollars. Our average price per person entering the door is getting pretty close to about a hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Last year, the dean reported, Extension did $690,000 worth of tuition activity and an additional $600,000 of government-based activity, contract work. As well, the department generated approximately $300,000 through the residence. The present total activity in Extension amounts to $1.7 million a year, with a reduction on the draw from base from $400,000 to $180,000. The goal is to be liability free within two years. He summarized the freedom and flexibilities of his entrepreneurial mandate, which differs sharply from that of the "regular college":

> Basically we're a zero-based-budget operation. I could spend ten million dollars if I could get ten million dollars' worth of revenues to cover it. My bank account is unlimited, and I was told that I had an unlimited bank account. I wasn't told to worry about every nickel and dime. What I was told to worry about was the bottom line. They're not interested in hearing from me how I'm going to spend three thousand dollars, or how much have I got for business travel and how much have I got for telephones? What they're interested from my department is the bottom line, and so if I have to go out and buy somebody a drink, I go out and buy them a drink, and it's not really a big issue for me. And I'm given that kind of lateral freedom, and the people that work with me are given that kind of freedom, as well.

The key to the success of Extension is its flexiblity because it is not financially connected to the "regular" program. Therefore, it can operate outside designated budgets and operating rules of the Department of Advanced Education. In Extension resources can be accumulated and redistributed according to the services performed. Extension is not encumbered by collective agreements and pays what the market will bear. The dean stated: "You've got to be constantly positioning yourself against your competition. And our competition is both with other institutions and government. We compete very directly with a company like Deloitte, Haskins, and Sells, which is a major management consulting firm." He mentioned that his department was offering a course to Alberta Wheat Pool middle-level managers for $1,500. Instructors are paid $1,000, and therefore a profit of $500 is made. The dean gave another example where he has hired a consultant for two years at $4,000 a week, for which he teaches "about twenty-five hours, but he's the best there is." An instructor of okibana--Japanese flower arranging--was imported from Japan to teach a course. The total cost of that person was $7,000, but the revenue generated from the course was $10,000. Regular faculty members are working for the Dean of Extension on Saturdays and evenings, which is outside the conditions of the faculty contract, the difference being that Extension is voluntary and regular programming is contractual. Interestingly, faculty will work for the market price even if it is below the contract overtime rate because the dean is free to hire anyone who can do the job. Another example of flexibility was where an instructor taught a course in Forages for an Indian reservation in High Level in exchange for a camera stand and camera for his laboratory so he could improve his instruction. The Furnishing and Equipment budget was lean, and his requisition could not be granted. The photographic equipment is presently part of the college inventory. On another occasion an instructor was remunerated with a trip to Philadelphia and Korea for professional development. The dean related his view of remuneration:

> So it doesn't always have to be monetary, direct-to-the-person kind of reward. What you do is you introduce a little bit of lubrication into the system, and people respond. I mean, the old adage is that job satisfaction is the most important thing, and when you're dealing with a group of committed people, it isn't really the financial rewards that they're after. But they're after other things.

The Extension Department has been useful in assigning costs to what have traditionally been "add-on" costs which were usually borne by faculty. According to the dean, big companies like Alberta Wheat Pool had, in the past, requested of senior administrators the use of the Olds facilities and "a little bit of help here and there" which "translates into work for faculty." The college now collects sufficient revenues to cover the cost of the new activities. "So when these people start knocking on the door for service, we say, 'Yes, we'll provide service, and here's the price.' We don't just say 'Yes, we're a community-minded institution that's going to do everything for everybody.'"

Environmental scanning is critical to the success of Extension. For example, should the futures market for the next year improve, "we've got to rethink our entire programming focus, because our focus has been on management issues," stated the dean.

> Companies such as Allanco, Hoechst, or BASF are like sharks out there. When they see a dollar they swim towards it. If they don't they swim around in lazy circles and are lost. You provide them one thing when they're lost; you provide them another thing when they're moving in a direction, and you have to be very responsive to that.

He believes that the Extension Department and the college are functioning within a world market with a Canadian, Western Canadian, and Alberta perspective. This has implications for marketing, as he related:

> My market is no longer Olds; my market is Western Canada. When I advertise a course, I advertise it in World of Beef; I don't advertise it in The Olds Gazette. I advertise things in The Cattlemen's Association; I don't advertise in The Didsbury Review. For me to advertise in those kinds of mediums means that I still have that limited focus.

The advertising is geared to particular segments of the market, and students come from northwest U.S., Fort St. John, and Manitoba in order to obtain cutting-edge knowledge. The dean summarized his marketing strategy:

> It's one thing to have clients walking in through your door: "But you can't base your future on what's happening today; you've got to be preparing for it all the time." And so you've always got to be in the forward-planning mentality. I don't say that we're not doing poorly right now, but a shift in the marketplace could wipe us out. It won't wipe out the full-time program base.

Coordinators from Extension have been assigned to various academic departments and perform a boundary-spanning function between the department and industry. Their salaries are generated from the cost-recovery courses they initiate. They have contacts in program-related industries and maintain open communication lines so that as needs emerge, courses can be delivered.

At present clients such as the Alberta Institute of Agrologists, the Alberta Association of Agricultural Fieldmen, and the Alberta Institute of Agricultural Development can approach Extension for programs. An example of the kind of service required would be the Alberta Institute of Agrologists' request for office training. Most of these people are technically competent but weak in administration and interpersonal skills. The University of Alberta has not seen it as part of its mandate to upgrade things such as teaching skills. The Extension Department has also found a niche in the professional development of agrologists through the creation of special seminars, where, according to the dean, normally they would have to go to "Idaho, Pittsburgh, or Toronto."

Program development. All new programs coming into Olds College, whether full- or part-time, will first go through the Extension Department. Program development is done on small and grand scales. An example of a small-scale focus was the proposed one-day courses for bankers. The slowest day for agricultural or commercial loans officers is mid-month, mid-week: Wednesdays in the middle of the month is their slowest day, since that is the day they do the least processing of anything. In order to lend money profitably, the loans officers must keep abreast of industry averages; therefore, a small program will be developed. The dean described how the program would work:

> We're going to charge those out at about a hundred and seventy-five dollars a day, we'll get a good person in, we'll do a one-day seminar, we'll attract maybe ten or twenty bankers. We'll move beef, say, we'll do beef in February in Calgary, in March at Olds, April in Edmonton. And those things will make good money.

Another example of program development was where an existing Farrier program of a four-month duration, which graduated 30 people in a year, was converted from a tremendous expense to a revenue generator. The farrier graduates returned to the farm as marginally qualified farriers after paying a tuition fee of $300. Industry was not being served since full-time farriers were losing business to the part-timers, yet the part-timers were not skilled enough to be full time. The industry recommended limiting the class size to 10 full-time people and giving the students a 10-month course. This kind of redevelopment was impossible within the regular program base, as there were insufficient funds. The college also wanted to incorporate part-time students. Therefore, the Extension Department took it over. The program was modularized and divided into six months of study with a four-month practicum. Students registered through Extension at a fee of $2,500 per student. Part-time students registered for some modules, the laboratory is used full time, and industry is accrediting students as soon as they leave.

Extension has developed programs for other institutions. Initially the college ran an adult upgrading program called College Qualifying. The intent of the program was to provide a seven-week experience to provide students for various college programs. The course had suffered high failure rates of 60-80%, since the people who required upgrading were so deficient in basic skills that they could not cope with the program. The college received funding from Alberta Vocational Training to put a one-year College Preparatory program into place. A complete review of the entrance requirements to all programs was conducted, taking into consideration changes in the high school curriculum. Red Deer College and Alberta Vocational Centre (AVC) in Calgary expressed concern over Olds College's intrusion into their respective Adult Upgrading mandate. Olds College's response was, in the words of the dean,

> "Look, we'll give you the program if you run it, but you've got to run it." And our ambition was not to run this program; it was to get it in place, have it here, because we need that kind of thing because it serves as a feeder. But we don't want to do it, because we don't want to focus in on that stuff. We want to focus in on agriculture. So AVC said "Yes, we'll give you even fifty thousand dollars--we'll even put in our own money, and we'll run it." So we said, "It's yours!" And so it's now an AVC program at Olds College. But when we had asked for that kind of support in the first place, no, that wasn't available.

The Extension dean explained that the college was in dire need of "a safety net" to accommodate the growing number of students with skill deficits. He saw the role of Extension as a program developer--"our job is not to run full-time academic programs; our job is to get them up and going and pass them over to another department or agency to maintain."

A major upcoming enterprise for Extension is Seed and Grain program development as a result of federal legislation which is designed to privatize the regulating arm of the industry. The seed and grain industry is all the activity associated with grading, cleaning, packaging, selling, and moving seed in Canada. Seeds include coarse seeds such as barley and oats; fine seeds such as alfalfa, clover, and grass; and horticultural seeds such as flowers and vegetables. The government will retain control over import and export but will relinquish all other control to the industry. While there will be federal jobs lost, new jobs will be created in the industry for which large groups of people will have to be trained. The training requirements are complex and are at various levels. The first is a short-course, upgrading level for people "to meet the new standards which used to be met by government agents." The second and third are at the certificate and diploma levels. A contingency fund of $40,000 will be used to launch one- and two-year diploma courses in addition to a "net revenue generator" of a short-course industry upgrading program. A coordinator has been designated to the project, and plans are underway to conduct an industrial review. The dean anticipates a full-time faculty position within a year and a half.

The ability of colleges, through their regular programming, to respond to demands from industry is encumbered by policy, program approval, collective agreements, resistance to change, and a negative set towards part-time programming. The flexibility and mandate given the

Olds Extension Department has allowed the college to provide a needed service to its agricultural environment, in addition to keeping abreast of cutting-edge technology. The department has demonstrated great potential as a research and development function for the entire college and thereby assists the college in keeping in touch with a rapidly changing environment.

The industrial reviews had provided the academic sector with valuable recommendations relating to the configuration of programs. The traditional discipline-focussed structure and programs were inappropriate for industry, whose requirements cut across program and discipline lines. Some reorganization was required so that programs could be integrated. This responsibility became the task of the vice-president, the deans, and the department heads. A proposal outlining a possible structure was drafted by the vice-president but met with resistance from faculty. The administration referred the reorganization to committee for review.

The Extension Division is the primary adaptive arm of the college. It is not bound by the constraints of the regular programs. A major function for Extension is the program-development role where programs are initiated with the intent of passing them over to the regular departments once they are flourishing. The administration holds great promise for the Extension Division and predicts that it could eventually be the size of the current regular program. The Extension Division has been an effective college response to change. The upcoming chapter describes some of the consequences of change, which are an important consideration in The Story of Olds College.

Chapter 8

Consequences of Change

The college has undergone major change over Cornish's tenure. A senior administrator speculated, "I think we have woken up a sleepy little college." This chapter will explore some of the consequences of rapid change. A growing number of college personnel feel the college is running the risk of overresponding to industry. A training-for-industry versus education-for-life issue is emerging. Some students are concerned over the rigorous timetables which do not allow for extracurricular activities. Some faculty are complaining about burnout and insensitive leadership. Several staff believe morale is suffering, while others are enthusiastic about the college's high morale.

Education Versus Vocational Training

Olds College is striving to maintain very close contacts with industry. Through the industry reviews feedback is given to the college as to how graduates can be improved. One staff member was proud that "we are responding to industry's needs, so that we turn out a product that can go to work right away." Another manager stated, "What our students represent is a product for that market." An interviewee's interpretation of what industry is saying is,

> "We want these people to be very now and competitive and high tech.," and then when you stop and you look at the whole process in the broad sense, you see that they're looking for people who come out ready to jump right into their career. They could walk in that door and sit down and do the job completely. So that's why we've kind of changed, I think, our whole focus to be that.

The effect of responding to industry has been a rigorous student workload. Thought has been given to extending courses to three or more years. Since "you just can't keep loading it in, at some point you have to change it." One faculty member felt that some students are overburdened and are on the verge of burnout when "they're running seven hours a day." Another instructor was concerned with the trend toward "the program extreme where the students can be timetabled from eight o'clock in the morning till five o'clock in the evening, and they have an hour's break for lunch and that's it." The overemphasis on employability in some faculties' perspective runs the risk of giving students a "very, very narrow education." The feeling was that other institutions do not overload their students as Olds College does. Students who get involved in extracurricular activities must pay a price, as a respondent observed:

> For a lot of them it simply means that they have to take the two-year program and extend it into a three-year, so that they only carry so many courses to allow themselves time for involvement in other aspects on campus. And that's a pity.

The students felt that there was not much flexibility in the timetable, and, as a result, participation in athletics, clubs, and student government was reduced. They referred to their schedule as that of "a big high school" because it was so structured. Students did perceive the college staff as "personable, easy, and accessible," although they felt the quality of life would improve with more unstructured time for "not partying and that, but just the intermingling and getting to know people a little bit better, the sharing of common experiences, I guess." Students recognize the problems in attending a small college. One student reported:

> I had the same instructor for five courses last year, so if you had any type of a problem with an instructor like that at all, you can realize the situation you would be in. So that's, I guess, the bad side of being small.

Historically, students of Olds College have had day-long classes without much room for extracurricular activity. Students have opted for rigorous programs which entail rigorous schedules, although some staff have recognized the need for more unassigned time. According to a senior administrator, this "bundle of issues" has yet to be addressed by Academic Council. He believes:

> it will call for a radical revision of the learning process, from teaching content to teaching a particular discipline's base knowledge and then that discipline's strategy for ongoing learning. This will result in a huge reorientation to teaching, but it is the only way to bridge the twin pressures of increasing content (technical training) and learning how to learn in a context (education).

One student reported some frustration with lingering paternalism in faculty attitude, specifically in programs where, in addition to course work, students had to "do chores" at the beginning and end of the day. They have expressed an inconsistency in that staff "want a mature student, but they're not going to treat him in a mature manner: 'You're a mature student until you get out of line, and then we take you over our knee.'"

One professional felt the college was ignoring the students' "educational growth needs" because in some areas students were getting into programs which were very "hands on." Another mentioned that students who graduate from a post-secondary institution and had never used the library had missed an important part of their devleopment. In response to colleagues who have overreacted to business requirements, one manager stated, "We can massage the employers all we want, but it's still the students that are paying the tuition fees."

An administrator remarked,

> Fortunately, the vocational model hasn't taken throughout the organization; it's being resisted. Certainly it is the trades model, and we do a little bit of trade training here, but it hasn't taken very well in Plant Science. People don't know why, but they know it's wrong.

Staff have made the point that many of the skills identified by the industrial reviews run counter to the vocational trend. The Alberta Society of Engineering Technologists, for example, have placed Computer-Assisted Drafting and engineering skills below good communication skills, good human relations skills, and the ability to learn. These life-long skills are much more durable than the technical skills which can become obsolete at the moment technology shifts. Therefore, from the perspective of those who advocate a liberal, general education:

> The things that we teach them are the things that last the rest of their life: We teach them to write a business letter, to write a technical report, to get up and stand and speak in front of twenty or fifty people. And those are life-long skills.

There appears to be some backlash to the zealousness with which people have taken up the mandate. Student assertiveness is emerging, and college personnel are "beginning to debate whether or not our client is the student or the employer." Many staff feel that Olds College has a good combination of student and industry interests. A senior administrator makes the pivotal point that an equilibrium must be struck and that the college has to be cautious in responding to industry. He believes that, beyond the industrial review,

> we had to add our own professional expertise and our skills and training and the college needs, and more than anything else we really had to add the students' needs in this thing, because industry are reflecting their needs. And to the extent it results in immediate employment of graduating students, those needs may be common, but in terms of a longer-term career path of students, we have to be careful that we modify what industry

> is telling us with some of those needs, so that we don't end up with students in dead-end careers should the industry need change. And so what we have to do in the final analysis in developing the curriculum is to really reflect student needs, college needs, as well as industry needs.

Faculty have stressed the need to obtain long-term information concerning graduates. Are they being too narrowly trained? What upgrading skills would be most advantageous? and so forth. The key to producing the successful graduate lies in achieving the critical balance between student, college, and industry needs.

Burnout, Overload, and Stress

Throughout the organization people mentioned burnout, overload, and stress. Staff attribute these conditions to the fact that the college has been running to "catch up" to industry and to become involved in "new and innovative things." A manager recognized that change creates increased workloads and stress:

> When you make change, you do create a lot of work, and certainly every time we make one of these changes--and they're significant changes, and they're good changes; we can't knock that or can't deny that these are good changes--but what you are doing is you are creating an additional stress on the workload, and I'm not sure if we've always recognized that when we've made these changes.

A senior administrator felt that burnout was "right across the organization. I don't think there was any area that was spared, really." He referred to the pressures under which the farm was operating. They were trying to balance production and instruction while at the same time promoting joint venture research and applied demonstration research. In Extension the dean was so busy that an assistant had to be hired eventually to handle the day-to-day aspects of the department, which were generating so much activity that the financial administration was having difficulty in costing revenues and expenses to the appropriate project. The deans were shorthanded in that they were operating without department heads in some critical areas while, at the same time, developing proposals for international projects, conducting industrial reviews, plus tending to their regular administrative duties. Most staff were prepared to give that little bit extra, but, in the words of one manager, "We're a small college with big ambitions." The college does not have a large infrastructure; therefore, middle managers and administrators are carrying a wider range of job responsibility and "maybe a greater workload--maybe." In the same breath, the staff member quickly added, "So I think that any feeling about being overworked is fairly quickly covered or usurped by that feeling of being involved in a very dynamic organization that's involved in exciting things and new things and so on."

A Systems Committee was established to co-ordinate planning efforts. Departments are requested to submit critical dates from which a "huge matrix chart" is made. There are times when it is impossible to put on another project "because we will break," stated one faculty member.

Due to the nature of a few programs, some instructors are teaching seven hours a day for at least two and sometimes three terms. The increased workload precludes the involvement of those faculty members in instructional improvement efforts.

> Maybe that's the problem: They didn't get rid of anything! The whole instruction thing is kind of double edged, because while they are screaming for improved instruction, they are upping the workload of instructors so that they can't really take advantage of things, and a lot of instructors are saying, "Well, I'm marking totally different now: I'm marking Scantron true and false, where I used to make the students think for themselves and really write long essays."

An instructor expressed frustration over the difficulty in keeping up with industry and having to balance teaching responsibilities and professional development. It is impossible for an instructor to leave for two weeks on a course in the middle of classes. It just doesn't work."

The college had experienced a significant change since 1985. Tremendous energy and excitement had been felt across the college as personnel developed contacts with industry and redeveloped programs over the last three years. An administrator emphasized the difference between initiating change and managing change effectively: "I think what we're finding is that the kinds of skills we all have in initiating change are not necessairly the kinds of skills that we need to manage that change effectively." Staff members can operate at peak efficiency and extend extra energy for only so long before they begin to back off:

> Obviously we can't do everything that's on our plate. We have created an appetite, and we've created expectations, and we've created a reputation across Canada and even internationally, and particularly in the international work that we can't follow through on. It's not possible, given the resources we've got. And so the question is, then, how do you manage that so that we keep people performing at a very high level and happy and part of the participative management process? And that's an entirely different proposition than initiating change.

Over the period of the last few years of activity at Olds College, the little slack that existed has been consumed. Change is costly. People have reached their limit in terms of time and resources. Strategies need to be developed for attracting more students. And "where are we going to attract them to, and if we're going to develop something, what are we going to give up?" People expressed exasperation with taking more on: "They have to learn to say no, and it's getting to be a serious state," remarked one instructor.

A manager indicated that the consultative process in some ways was responsible for additional pressure: "I don't think that we realize what we're doing in terms of stressing our, quote, unquote, 'normal' workloads." Management by committee was a stressor for an instructor who declared that if one sat on more than one committee, one ended up "discussing the same damned stuff." She continued that the decision-making process has slowed down such that "at times you can't see it happen!" "Everybody is committeed to death!" exclaimed a manager in some frustration. A negative indicator of overinvolvement is that managers tend not to take holidays. Frequently people find themselves "double booked" for meetings. A negative aspect of participation is a tendency "to exaggerate one's importance in the whole picture: 'My God, the college will fall apart if I'm not here because I'll miss four meetings!'" Support staff too are delaying holidays in order to participate in preparation and planning activities. Staff feel additional pressure as a result of their availability for meetings, since, due to fairly rigid schedules, meetings tend to be through lunch time or after hours. Getting people together for meetings can be a source of stress for people as well. The price of participation and consultation presents a dilemma for staff who find they have little available time. A Faculty Association member articulated the problem:

> "Hey, guys, you cannot have it both ways. If you're going to be part of this whole structure and this whole change, you've got to devote the time. I'm sorry if you have to work three hours a day on it for the next two months. So what? You wanted the input." Otherwise they can do it to us.

The theme of overload and burnout recurred through the interviews. It is likely something that the college may have to address in the near future, as there appears to be a sense of increased urgency throughout the college.

Administration-Staff Relationships

Overall, people interviewed felt very positive about administration-staff relations, although there were some minority views. A few people perceived the college as being overadministered; in fact, one faculty member believed the enrollment of the college should be three times what it is in order to justify the present administration. More seasoned faculty see the administration perpetuating themselves. In reference to the overabundance of administrators, one instructor observed, "I think it's been inflicted on us by administrators who have come in and seen it happen somewhere else." A few suggested that the administration contained one layer more than necessary and intimated that it was the dean's position which was expendable: "We've got deans till hell wouldn't have them!"

People have commented on "an absolute incredible proliferation in policies." Administration is costly, so, according to one instructor,

> when you're at my level, which is basically one of the low levels, you have a whole bunch of people in positions trying to continually justify their position, so they think up something and then it gets shifted down to you to do all the work for it, to help them justify their position.

An interviewee claimed that Olds College, while small, was, like any institution, "leviathan," as it takes them so long to react, in some senses, like a bigger college or university. One faculty member asserted that administration had introduced the deans "as a streamline, which, in effect, it has not been a lick; it's been power building." Another source of annoyance to personnel is the chargeback procedure on the

College Farm. In order to appropriate the costs of production and instruction, staff must assign a budget to activities. This procedure is time consuming and frustrating to people who, under regular circumstances, never thought of whether their activity was instruction or production. Often the decision is quite arbitrary. Paperwork has increased.

The concept of the "hidden agenda" was raised a number of times throughout the interview process and in various contexts. In fact, the notion was identified in the 30-item Problem under "Trust (Academics for Vice-President)" in reference to Academic Reorganization (see Appendix 6). A few instructors have referred to the hidden agenda of the administration to "get rid of a dean" and "to disband liberal arts" inherent in the organizaton proposal. A senior administrator sees the hidden agenda technique as one of dissention and mistrust which can be used effectively when one is a civil servant. Intrigues and rumors can ensue, the consequences of which he believes staff are unaware. He stated:

> I'm not sure that those folks realize how disruptive that can be and how destructive it can be in terms of trying to create an institutional belief in what we're doing. We're all Olds College, and we're the best college on the face of the earth! It's difficult to get that spirit going when there's some dissension there. And so, I don't go very quickly with the moves. I push a little and back off, test it and back off, until people are quite convinced that there isn't a hidden agenda there.

A faculty member sensed that some senior administrators are powerful and have good, perhaps overwhelming, ideas. Therefore,

> it's easy to say a person has hidden agendas, and I would say we've had a very democratic kind of management, and you will always have a few people that are whining. They're asked to partake and be involved in the process, and they say they want

> to be, and then when it comes right down to the crunch, when you ask them to do something, they're not so ambitious any more.

One interviewee expressed the feeling that over the years faculty have had occasion to mistrust the administration, which has forced people to "pull the reins in a little bit and stick up for their own departments." Some past changes initiated by administration have affected departments and have left some bad feelings which surface in the face of pressure or ambiguity.

A minority view. A few staff members felt there was a myth of democracy which, "the way this organization operates, is not participative and democratic beyond departments." By and large, the minority group felt that there was an unhealthy inconsistency between what the president does and says and how he lets the vice-president run the organization. Cornish takes a long-range view and Bigsby a very short-term view. An interviewee suggested that "nobody's putting any meaning or any perspective into what's going on in the organization." Some people interviewed found Cornish to be inaccessible in spite of his declared open-door policy. One person felt annoyed reading "Cornish saying in the Red Deer Advocate what direction Olds College is in before I know it, and that's what I find--I'm reading this and thinking, 'Oh, great!'" The impression students had of Dr. Cornish was that he was forthright: "He's not a smoke-and-mirrors guy." A student felt that Cornish intends to be accessible, but circumstances sometimes interfere. The president can say to students, "You're the reason why we're here," but "it's the guy mopping the floor over in [the Administration building] that Dan should be talking to sometimes. It loses something on the way down; there's something lost there."

Students felt that Cornish "keeps himself in touch" and gave an example of how the president, after a tragic off-campus suicide of a college student, made an attempt to find out the background of the student, the circumstances, and "attitudes of the students around." Students feel the president's support and intention to be open and recognize his pressures. The perception of one student is:

> As far as Dan is concerned, "Sure, you can come in any time at all with a half-talked idea and run it by me. Don't worry about . . . ." But you get caught between all those other five people you have to go through.

Approximately seven years ago a decision was made to eliminate the Heating Plant, which entailed a switch from high- to low-pressure steam boilers. As a result, between six and eight positions were declared redundant. Staff gave two very different interpretations of the president's treatment of the affected college personnel. One staff member saw the president as "hardnosed . . . we're warm and humanistic but we still make tough decisions, and people get fired." Cornish's behavior was interpreted as "schizophrenic" and inconsistent with his rhetoric of participation and democracy. From the minority group perspective, decisions were made unilaterally or with small groups of people and implemented. There is an aura of consultation, but fundamentally the administration's style was authoritarian. The leadership was "more interested in dollars than in people." In their view, the president believes the organization to be participative and democratic, yet "no one else in the organization believes that."

The same incident perceived by another staff member was related very differently. The affected employees were given advance notice of more than a year of their redundancy, and there was a "pretty good package" when they left. According to the interviewee, the administration treated the situation with "greater sensitivity" and "seemed to be bending over backwards or really helpful to the people who were going to lose their jobs." The last perspective appears to be consistent with the perceptions and feelings towards the administration of the majority of interviewees.

The majority view. Most of the people interviewed, while tired and overworked, believed Olds College is a "great place to work." An instructor said enthusiastically that people are happy with their jobs at least 75% of the time. He believed that much of the stress he witnessed was "self-inflicted" and that people should reduce their involvement periodically "to catch up."

> I think burnout would result if you had bad stress. Good stress is where you're having fun doing what you're doing, and you're managing that. I don't think there's too much change. I think it's up to us to learn how to manage change. It's always going to be there, and the campus on the whole is managing change. We'd all like our workloads reduced so we could do the more fun things; that would be great. And right now we have a decent workload.

A manager reported that there was an absence of the indicators of low morale. The rate of absenteeism was low, there was not a high rate of alcoholism, and theft of company property was not a problem. "You couldn't find a better place in the whole wide world to work!" exclaimed one enthusiastic instructor. People attribute the high morale to the open manner in which the senior management conduct their affairs. Olds staff compared the atmosphere and working conditions of other academic institutions and were happy to be at the college. Cross-curriculum, cross-campus integration, and participation in college governance were seen as measures of greater trust. The comment of a staff member is representative of the feelings collegewide:

> I wouldn't want to paint to you an unnecessarily or an unrealistically rosy picture about all this participation, because we do get knock-down-drag-'em-out sometimes, but in this climate we're allowed to do that, and then we're allowed to forget it and get on to the next activity, and nobody is held responsible forever for something they said last August.

People trust the administration more than before. Evidence of trust was that at all-staff meetings people do not feel there would be recrimination for asking the wrong question. However, the energy and the commitment of staff are being stretched as the college has experienced rapid change.

Some of the consequences of the rapid change which the college has experienced were explored in this chapter. An emerging issue is the tension created by overresponsiveness to industry and the need for time to "learn to learn" and for students to become involved in extracurricular activities. Clearly, Olds College is not a liberal arts college, but some have reported that more attention should be given to "life-long skills."

Some staff have reported that they have been stretched thinly and that there is a need for priority setting and a period of consolidation. Others felt that burnout was self-inflicted and that good stress from being active and involved is useful.

The administration-staff relationships at Olds College have improved greatly since the former administration. Staff appreciate the consultative style of the administration while recognizing that involvement does take energy.

The final chapter reflects upon the occasionally rival cultures of the town and the college. President Cornish is credited with the improved relationships between the college and the town of Olds. Aspects of the changing culture of the college are discussed as The Story of Olds College comes to an end.

Chapter 9

The Culture of Olds Town and College

This, the last chapter describes the current town-gown relationship which has improved significantly over the past. The community is proud of its college and has recently participated in some joint ventures. The college has changed--not only the people and their culture, but the facilities have changed as well.

The profile of the student body is very different from that of just a few years ago. Values are also changing at Olds College as traditional gender roles are crumbling. Some legends, rumors, and pranks which are part of the college culture are explored before the conclusion of The Story of Olds College.

The Town-Gown Relationship

Olds College is in itself a "big inner community" of the town of Olds. As referred to earlier, some enmity existed between the town and the college. There has been a rapprochement over the last few years largely attributable to President Cornish and the external relationships he has built. He and his family have made visible commitments to the town. The college provides the president with a residence; nevertheless, Cornish purchased property in town and his wife owns a dress shop and is therefore seen as part of the local business community. Cornish's in-laws have moved to Olds to be near their family, and this has not gone unnoticed:

> There's a real good feeling that the Cornishes put down some roots here. And that's signalling that he wouldn't be just bouncing in, adding something to his CV and bouncing out to another college. And I think the community appreciated this.

The family is known to mix well in that they are warm and open and are involved in their child's school activities as well as being active in the community. These things matter in a small community, as:

> people like to see you coming in and adding to and becoming part of the fiber of the community. And every one of us brings a colored thread that enriches the tapestry of the community, and they like to see you do that, to weave your way in and to become part of the total picture. And I think the Cornishes have done that very successfully.

The college is open to the town. Space is made available for groups to hold meetings regardless of creed, color, or political organization. Staff report that the administration had made conscious efforts to "close the town-gown gap." College people were encouraged to attend the Chamber of Commerce meetings and to join service clubs. Local businessmen recognize that Olds College is the biggest employer in the town and have become much more supportive of the college.

The townline is a highway that passes between the town and the college, which is located in the county. People have remarked that the fact that the college has applied for annexation to the town has been a major step towards closeness between the two communities: "So there's much less of this 'we-them' type feeling. It's more an 'us' feeling, and that's extremely important to the community, because the community needs the college."

The community takes a lot of pride in the college and receives a lot of service, noted an administrator who sees the college becoming "part of the community instead of being part of the county" as being symbolic. President Cornish in the past tried without success to build an arena in conjunction with the local Agricultural Society. Attempts to collaborate with the town in the construction of a library, which would be jointly used, also failed due to mistrust. A community member indicated that the town had contributed twice to library initiatives at Olds College but were "shut out of it." The college "libraries" were housed in a dormitory and barn. When they moved to new premises, once the Learning Resources Center was built, "the books that were there, which people from Olds had donated, weren't even returned to the community." According to a staff member, half the townspeople have college library cards as community users. The discussions which took place over the two aborted overtures to the town, the arena and the library, "probably paved the way for what's happening now," observed an Olds citizen.

The foregoing statement was made in reference to a town-college joint submission to the government for the construction of an Aqua Leisure Center. The proposal calls for the shared financing of the swimming pool, while the college would have responsibility for the gym and other recreational facilities. A staff member felt that it will be a "kind of unifying thing, where we cooperatively work together to share a beautiful facility that's only nicer through our cooperation." She thought that people were now feeling better about collaborating with each other, but "it's been a very slow process."

The Olds Town and College chuckwagon campaign, strongly supported by President Cornish, proved to be an effective focus which brought the two communities together. In the summer of 1988 the college sponsored the Jerry Bremner chuckwagon in celebration of the college's seventy-fifth anniversary. Chuckwagon races are an Alberta tradition, and annually races are held throughout rural communities in Alberta, culminating in the World Championships at the Calgary Stampede in July. The chuckwagon races are part of most major rodeos in rural Alberta; therefore, through the wagon, the college is displayed before a potential student market. Originally a recruiting tool to raise the awareness of the Alberta agricultural community, the campaign proved most effective in uniting the college and the town, particularly since it ran in the final heat. In the words of one informant,

> It wasn't just the Olds College people cheering for that wagon, because they made it to the final night; it was the townspeople, too, because, I mean, hey, that Olds wagon, Olds College, whatever, it's in the same town. So it brought about a certain degree of unity there, and then that helped; that was a big one.

The chuckwagon was an ideal symbol for the college, as it was consistent with the agricultural tradition and mandate that had been articulated. The wagon was painted in the yellow and blue college colors, and the college's logo was stencilled on as well. Prior to the Stampede, the college hosted a Chuckwagon Breakfast to which the townspeople were invited.

This summer the Chuckwagon Campaign was enlarged to include joint town-college sponsorship. The tarp (tarpaulin) which displays the sponsor reads "Olds Town and College" and is designed to "bring attention to Olds educational and economical possibilities" (The Olds Gazette, June 21, 1989). The promotion includes jackets, belt buckles, T-shirts, buttons, and bandanas which advertise the town and the college. The photo (see Plate 6) was featured on the front page of the town newspaper. Olds' Mayor Armstrong was quoted as referrring to the chuckwagon campaign as "it was 'community pride' that would propel the joint venture to success."

Another indication of the lowering of town-gown barriers was identified by a staff member who sat on the local Daycare Board. Once

Plate 5. Olds Town and College wagon - Driver Jerry Bremner - Grande Prairie, June, 1989

Plate 6. Driver - Jerry Bremner, Chuckwagon Organizing Committee members Hugh Bodner, Linda Clarkson, Mayor Bob Armstrong, Marlys Kaiser, and Olds College President Dan Cornish (Olds Gazette, June 21, 1989). Photo courtesy of the Olds Gazette.

there may have been insensitivity to students, but when the argument that students are often under severe financial restraint was presented to the board, it was agreed that children of Olds College students would be eligible for a reduced rate. The response from the non-college board member was that

> she felt it was a wonderful idea, that of course we should have a student rate because, after all, we're now in all of it, that the college students now bring in children who will require before- and after-school care.

Attitudes toward the college have changed. Townspeople are "starting to ease up" their perceptions of college personnel and students. They are coming to realize that the college "has been the lifeblood of this town." Approximately 400 students live in suites in town, and students are supporting the town's businesses. An interviewee commented,

> Dan Cornish has been the person that has changed that to whatever it is today. . . . I know that he's had to swallow quite a few things to really work at that relationship, but he has, and he's had quite a bit of success.

The president is given credit by many people interviewed for the improvement of the town-gown relationship.

Acceptance of Change

Prior to Cornish's arrival, college personnel felt threatened by change. They were heavily influenced by the bureaucratic tradition of the government departments and were resistant to new, different ideas. Attitudes have changed, to quote one manager: "I think people are realizing that we have to change to stay in our business. If we're going to maintain our leadership, we have to respond; we have to change. I think people believe that." He recognized the pressure that participation and innovation had placed upon staff:

> But I think they're kind of excited. They kind of get this feeling, whether it's been instilled into their minds or beaten in or whatever, that we are kind of on the leading edge, that we are kind of leaders--not kind of, but we are leaders. I think they're excited about that. I get the feeling that--I feel it's very dynamic: change, constant change, but not disruptive, or not in the negative sense. It's a challenging kind of change.

Cornish believes in the importance of creating a supportive climate which places a high value on how "we treat each other." Another major emphasis of his is that delivery, whether a task or instructor, "has everything to do with the quality and the excellence that we do that with." He states that the fundamental cultural change at Olds College is the focus on people and the importance of individuals at all levels of the organization. His philosophy is articulated by a staff member who felt that instructional concern was addressed to the job satisfaction of the individual:

> I think that this is really a concern of Dan's, that the individual be recognized, that the individual feel that he is an important part of the college, whether he's a caretaker in residence or a dean in one of the faculties, that they all feel that they are valued as an individual. And that's a mammoth task, and I'm not sure--I feel that I am important to the college, and I've been made to feel that way. You could interview somebody else and they may feel very differently, but I think that, yes, the individual is important on campus, and I think that they're doing everything they can to try and make the individuals feel recognized.

Most people interviewed felt "valued" and had a sense of ownership for the college. A manager expressed the view that the college promotes self-evaluation, and "if you find yourself coming up short, . . . go ahead and fix it up." In fact, she continued, "it feels good to evaluate yourself and see how you are doing." Another faculty member felt that "learning how to manage change" was the key. People, he believed, should not be concerned about taking risks. The secret is

> not to be afraid of precedent; not to be afraid to try something new; not to, you know, the temptation, the status quo. All the way up and down the line we see this acceptance of change. We sometimes are shown, it's put on a platter for us.

His last remark was made in reference to the instructional support mechanisms which were outlined earlier. This faculty member felt that the campus was beginning to share the appropriate attitude towards change--"*responding to the big world out there in time*" (my italics). Adaptive change was possible due to the supportive environment created by the college leadership. A department head, in reference to a change towards a progressive increase in the quality of education, declared,

> I would say that if you were, on a scale of one to ten in attitudes, to do that kind of a thing, in 1980 it would have been a scale of about three out of ten, or two out of ten, and today it's probably, collegewide, seven or eight out of ten.

The attitude in the college towards change was substantially different from the prevalent conditions when Cornish became president in 1982.

College Facilities as Symbolic

A staff member indicated that the new Learning Resources Center (L.R.C.) was "a symbol that finally somebody cared, somebody recognized it, that we really did have a problem. And it changed students' attitudes towards the library and the service that we were providing: They view the library as an important academic center." When Cornish arrived, the library was housed in an old, abandoned dairy barn which had mice, got a little wet, and "smelled a bit of cow manure." The previous library facility had become a legend. A new staff member shared her first impressions of the new L.R.C.: "It's a little bit too modern. It makes a statement. It says 'now,' you know, and I thought, 'I don't know if this place can handle it.' But that is what the college is working towards imagewise."

In the fall of 1988 sod was turned for a new, much-needed, $8.5 million Land Science Center, since the horticulture-related programs have rapidly expanded. People have attributed campus development, which, in addition to the above, includes funds for the farm, upgrading the residence, and the proposed Aqua Leisure Complex, to Cornish's external public relations activity. Improved facilities have accounted for "a tremendous change, I suppose largely in morale," remarked a faculty member. "So in six years Dan can say, 'Boy, in terms of what the college had when I came and what it's got now, things have improved substantially.'" Through a period of restricted provincial funds, resources had been diverted to Olds College due largely to leadership shown by the president. The facilities are symbols and are tangible evidence of positive change.

Student Diversity

The diversity in the student body is reflective of the changes which are occurring in the environment. Students who are attracted to Olds College now have a unique combination of the traditional rural values, which is the history of the student body at the college, and the emerging cosmopolitan, technological, career-oriented values and attitudes of the student of the 1980s. The profile of the student body is changing, and the faculty are adapting in response.

A staff member in Student Services remarked on "the very familial sense" at the college. She remarked on the incidence of homesickness and the tremendous influence the family has on many of the students. A "home atmosphere" is promoted at the college, and "homelike" programs are planned through the residence. Graduation is a time when the value of the family is evident, as the "bleachers are all families": "There's grandmas, there's grandpas, there're aunts, uncles, brothers. It's not unusual for our students to want to buy five or six or seven or eight tickets to bring their families to graduation." Graduation is very well attended and is a gala affair where approximately 400 graduates return to the college, many from a long distance. Following the ceremony, at the President's Reception, students "have the opportunity to introduce Mom and Dad to 'my wonderful Political Science instructor who got me through this year' and those kind of things." Students and their families then proceed to an arena for dinner, where last year, for example, 1,100 people had a sit-down roast beef dinner after which a very well attended graduation dance was held.

Instructors can determine the type of family and the kind of agricultural experience students have had by their questions in the classroom:

> You can tell whether it's a very progressive family that's open to new ideas, or whether it's the type of family that just, "We've always done it this way every since Grandpa homesteaded, and it's always going to stay this way."

A faculty member explained how the pressures of the students' family farms have to be accommodated by the program starting late and having to be compressed. The mid-October start is because

> ninety percent of the students are from farms, and we have to cater to them, wait until the crops are off. We draw students from Saskatchewan, throughout Alberta, which includes Northern Alberta; and Peace River country, we have quite a few students; and in B.C. So down in Southern Alberta crops are off in September, but up in Northern Alberta, Edmonton and whatnot,

> there's still some stuff going on at the end of September, depending on what the particular year is like.

The majority of Olds College students come from rural backgrounds. Most of the Secretarial Arts students are from the vicinity of Olds, but 90% of the student population come from other parts of Alberta, Western Canada, and other countries. However, more recently students in programs such as Fashion Merchandising and Horticulture have come from "urban bases" with, according to a new employee,

> different perspectives on things, and I think from the student point of view, it provides a very good mix, so you have not only the urban kids who don't really know what a cow looks like, like myself until I came here, and then with the rural kids who culturally require a lot of different things in terms of how they spend their time.

One third of the student population live within driving distance of their homes, while the remaining two thirds live in residence or in town. The average age of students has reached 22, and increasing numbers of students have families, which places pressure on the residence. More serious students find the residence noisy, and at present the residences cannot accommodate children. The only alternative open to them is rental accommodation in town.

Students and staff alike commented on the "age mix" in their classes. An instructor remarked,

> "But, geez, you've got a lot of older people in your program: 24 or 25, 30," and he said, "Oh, I wish they were all 24, 25, or 30. They're here, and they know what they're here for, and they react accordingly." He said, "It's the other ones I have the problems with."

More mature students are career oriented and know what they want, as opposed to students directly from high school who are "taking a break" before returning to the farm, although instructors have indicated that the students who come directly from high school are more career oriented and "nice to work with." Student Services reported that 11% of the students have come to Olds College from another postsecondary experience. The preparation of these students is in sharp contrast to students who "are very, very skilled with their hands but are weak in some of the pure academic areas."

Interviewees reported that a dominant student characteristic is their career orientation. A former student explained:

> I wasn't keeping up to the people around me. I had to retrain myself, go back to school, so that I could then have not just a job, but a position. And that's very much the trend with all of my friends.

Many students have chosen a career and have "shopped around" for the appropriate training experience: "I didn't want to have to take a broad spectrum of, let's say, plant courses, because I knew that I wanted to be specifically into beef production."

Informants have described Olds College students as "worldly," "technically oriented," "job oriented," "very focused," and "more aassertive and demanding." Many students are working, the consequence of which is that attendance patterns have to change; therefore, noted a faculty member,

> we have to adapt to those changing attendance patterns: If they want to come on Saturday, we've got to be ready to teach them on Saturday. Now, that's why a Dean of Extension Services is running with a whole different agenda than I'll call our "regular" deans.

The changing student characteristics have implications for staff and faculty, many of whom have been at the college for more than 15 years, when the profile of the student population was much more traditional: "It makes it tougher as an instructor: You can't just stand up in front of the room and babble for two hours. You have to answer these tough questions based on their experiences," an instructor reflected. Students are "asking questions and challenging their instructors," which forces faculty to keep up with technology, "because you can never be ahead too far." If students feel that a course is not meeting their needs, then "they're quite outspoken as a result." One faculty member was quoted in reference to the "new" students who are "not willing to spend their money to hear B.S. anymore, so you have to be on your toes."

Students have found that some staff at the college are "cold" and "refuse to revise their stereotype" of the student. They believe it could be a potential problem for the future "because we are getting more mature students who know exactly what they're saying and aren't as intimidated by administrators as, say, an eighteen- or nineteen-year-old student is." A student related an incident which involved instructors scheduling tests through exam week, which was supposed to be kept free of assignment in order to allow students time to concentrate on their exams. Student representatives approached administration with their concerns and began to assert themselves, something that will increase in the future unless there is a change of attitude among a few faculty members. Students feel that some of the lingering traditional, paternalistic attitudes should change. One student commented on the college improvements he had seen, yet he thought,

> they've got a lot more changes that still need to be made, and the biggest one is how they treat their students. I don't know if that's so much a policy change as it's going to be more attitudinal, like, more of an attitude change than anything else.

Enrollments will continue to grow because, in the words of a board member, the college's reputation

> in finding students employment is probably as good or better than any other college in the province, and it's been very successful, and that to a young person here is very meaningful. You're looking at a place to go for your education.

Change has placed considerable pressure on Olds College, and the college is responding and adapting to the new students.

Tradition, Careers, and Gender Roles

Some programs at Olds Colege have continued to be traditionally female: Secretarial Arts, Fashion Merchandising, and Equine. The predominance of women in these programs balances the overall college male-female ratio since many of the other programs have higher male enrollment. Women come to Olds College from other than rural communities. An Olds graduate on staff felt that, from her experience, the college was "a great place for girls to come and get away from the city, and then they can concentrate on their studies here, and it gives it a nice balance. Otherwise, you'd probably have a lot more guys than gals here."

The Equine program is exclusively female since, according to a staff member, males have already acquired the skills or are apprenticing, and girls go to school. Women are not employed in the oilpatch, so "they're allowed to come into this program because their parents figure they're going to get married and won't have to support themselves anyway." Women are gradually moving towards careers in agriculture in order to obtain comparable salaries "to what the men will make." Programs such as Agricultural Engineering, Floristry, and Landscaping are attracting an increasing number of women "so that they can make good money." Traditional values are changing. A young staff member observed,

> It's not like a number of years ago where if you wanted to be successful, your success was through who you married. Nowadays you have to make that success yourself, and only then will a successful young man marry you. It's very much that way; it's very competitive.

Agriculture has traditionally been male dominated, and the history of Olds College has held women in supportive roles, training them to be homemakers, while the men returned to become farmers. This lingering rural attitude, one manager speculated, was responsible for the fact that there are relatively few women in management: "We don't see women as movers and shakers at Olds College. We see women as support." One staff member indicated that there were few women in administrative positions in the external community, that is, town council or the public school system. "My goodness, we're slow, and we're behind in lots of ways." She continued, "It's a rural environment, and I think for a long time there probably weren't women who wanted to have a high profile in anything, but that is changing."

The college has women instructors in some non-traditional areas, and this trend is being encouraged. Staff spoke proudly of a female instructor with an engineering degree who is the head of the Agricultural Engineering Technology area, a program which has been almost exclusively male until recently. Gender stereotypes are slowly changing.

Recruitment and Values

Most respondents declared pride in Olds College's uniquely agricultural mission. One manager was unequivocal in his statement of value, that "we are the leading agricultural college, certainly in Western Canada, that we are unique, that we have better or greater opportunity for hands-on, practical learning." Many of the urban students being recruited do not have the commitment to agriculture. A new staff member from the city reported that some thought was being given to introducing a course as part of the core curriculum, the purpose of which would be to instill an appreciation of agriculture. There is no immediate fear of the value of agriculture being lost since the critical mass is primarily agriculturally oriented, but some are wary that an influx of urban staff and students may have a diluting effect.

Recruitment has been an important factor in the establshment and perpetuation of quality and value. A recently hired manager reported that the recruitment process was very consultative and involved five people on the committee. Hiring decisions are made on the basis of people's ability to adapt to change and their student orientation. Major changes have come to the college, as one instructor noted, "because we've changed the main players." Cornish hired his team based on its participative style and competence--which, as new personnel are hired, has influenced the entire organization. A staff member referred to his own case:

> You know, I don't want to take any particular credit. but using myself as an example, a fresh face coming in here, experience in industry, contact with the university organization and that type of community, and the ability to put those two together in a setting here, and I think that was the same for someone under the new administrators that came on stream and gradually some new instructors.

Eventually, instructors have been held more accountable, and support has been given to help them develop, which in turn has translated to improved quality of instruction. Veteran staff members recollect the old motto of the Olds School of Agriculture, "OSA," which stood for "Opportunity, Service, and Achievement." A senior instructor remarked,

> You don't have to have it spelled out on a piece of paper what the job is, so you go out of your way and you create a program for the people that pay to come here and for the industries that you serve, and that's the key word, is "serving."

The tradition of serving agriculture runs deep in the culture of Olds College.

Legends, Rumors, and Pranks

The following are a few "stories" which have been related through the interview process. The first legend was by far the most frequently told.

The action of the former administration, and particularly the "Clean-Up" President, have become a significant part of the culture of Olds College. The former administration disrupted the status quo and, in addition, "fired some people who were dearly beloved here," from which some people "are still recovering." An instructor referred to the college as a "neat little family" where all their needs were met, and "it's like someone killed their father." An administrator remarked, "There's still some blood on the walls; it hasn't all been mopped up yet. The vestiges are still apparent." A few people mistrust the current administration because of the actions of their predecessors. Whenever a threat is perceived by the staff, the "old we-they thing" of the past reign of terror resurges. An instructor stated,

> We still hear the good old days stories, believe it or not. I've been here for eight years, and I still hear all the stories from way back when, yet, before I started, and it's very fresh in people's minds, so I think that when people think of our administration now, they're very thankful that we have what we have now, but then every so often you'll hear the grumblings and so on.

Some staff members are resigned that the lingering mistrust of administration will always be there for some of their colleagues.

An instructor observed that human error at the college was often greatly magnified. She gave the example of a foal of which the Animal Health Technician had to amputate a leg. Someone from Finance walked over from the Administration Building and inquired after "the one-legged horse," assuming it must have been a trick."

In reaction to the traditional "dirt farmer" image, the joke among Agriculture Production students after having taken Business courses is, "I'm a businessman." One student said in residence, if "you handle life, you're a businessman. You go buy a sandwich, you're a businessman." He felt that it helps place the changing technology in perspective.

Some examples students gave of traditions at the college included losing basketball teams, the annual rodeo, "rez" parties, Little Royal (a revived fair tradition), and various program-focussed events such as Greek Rodeo, the Barn Burner, and Aggie Baggie. Each program has its initiation ritual pranks. The Animal Health students, in setting up the novice who is learning how to palpitate,

> simply place an apple inside the cow, sort of rectally, and then when the person comes along, of course, you cannot figure out what this object is, and then you don't dare pull it out, I mean, it could be attached.

Horts (horticulture students) put lemonade in the weed spray, farriers place horseshoes on horses backwards and send them along to the arena, and the meat cutters "always take something from the butcher's shop into the cafeteria for the soup, . . . horse hoofs, or a cow's ear." Students commented that these activities do not go on every year; they come back every so often. One observed, "You can imagine that's been going on ever since time forgotten."

There are many individuals whose inspirational service to the college is legend. Staff spoke of

> people that carried on a personal mandate of being proud of the college and what it was serving, and they went out of their way to deal with whether it was students or off-campus activities and short courses, and those are the things, I suppose, that help some of the programs grow and help the image that they had.

In this context the names of Buck Godwin and John Nielson were referred to frequently.

Among the stories circulated throughout the college about Buck Godwin, the following are most prevalent. The new dean, just after his appointment, visited Buck's department and asked, "What kind of problems do you guys have?" to which Buck replied, "Too many administrators--too many deans!" The story is told that Buck had kept track of holidays which he could not take due to work pressures and upon his retirement pressed administration for compensation in the vicinity of $15,000. He was successful in his appeal, to the consternation of the administration, who were surprised when Buck donated the entire sum to the College Foundation. One faculty member recalls casually mentioning her daughter's wedding to Buck, who arranged to have three impressive bouquets sent to the wedding.

Strong values, attitudes, and beliefs unique to Olds College are embedded in these and many other legends, myths, and ritual pranks which are integral to the organization's culture. The motto "Proudly Serving Agriculture" has deep meaning to the people who share the culture of the college.

Conclusion: The Present and Implications for the Future

A college member remarked that he was drawn to the college because it was a "doer's environment." He likened the college to an elephant: "Hard to get going, but once it is going you can't stop it." Most people indicated that they are happy: "I can't say enough good about this place." They report that no one has been fired for years, there have not been any strikes, the college is acquiring new facilities, and there is a flurry of program development. A faculty member gives Cornish credit for changing the college: "It's like we're way better in synch with the world; we really have been kicked into the new century."

In reference to the agricultural mandate, an administrator pointed out that,

> despite the fact that we were making attempts to provide a focus, the pie was also getting bigger within that broad field of agriculture in terms of hiring a Dean of Extension and turning him loose with a mandate really to generate activity.

This activity was evident in Instructional Design and the International Office, and, while it was exciting because Olds College is now known across Canada and internationally, it gives rise to the major question facing the college at present: "Given the limited amount of resources, exactly where are we going to focus our attention?" Many people have been working "well beyond a hundred percent of capacity and are in a bit of a burnout stage."

One observer noted that the college had conducted over 21 industrial reviews within the last couple of years, the activity generated was exciting, and everyone wanted to be part of the action. Because so many activities have surfaced, and "we have come over the peak," a different kind of leadership is required. Resources are limited, so support for all the initiatives is piecemeal. An administrator felt that if people's efforts are thwarted, then they lose incentive.

> And you quit asking, and you just kind of go along and try and survive. And so that has to take place relatively quickly, or you start losing that enthusiasm and that incentive. And that's not to say that it's--you know, it's still way, way, way higher than any other colleges or any other institutions, and the people that get to that level and start saying, "Well, unless it changes I've got to go and look for something else," turn right around and say, "But I love Olds College, and I don't want to go anyplace else." And they say the two things in the same breath.

The administration is aware of the fast-approaching crisis which has occurred because "we've done such a damned good of selling ourselves." Cornish believes that decisions have to be made about things the college cannot continue to do: "We need to say, 'These are what our priorities are,' and say no to those that don't fit those priorities." One of the decisions being discussed is to limit the number of courses in which students can register, beyond which there will be an additional fee. It is expected that courses will be packaged more to increase efficiency and reduce the faculty's workload.

President Cornish realizes that much of his energy and attention has been directed outwards in raising the college's image and obtaining resources. It is his intention to devote more time to human resource development, "to start to realize the values we've articulated." He continued to say that it was a commitment to a climate "where we learn to work together with mutual respect for each other and where we set up systems so that we're all continuously learning." Cornish realizes the personal cost associated with the level of activity at which people in the college have been operating, and "it puts the lie to what you really believe in in the organization." The challenge facing the organization is summarized in the following quotation from a staff member:

> What we're heading into now is where people have to then make some decisions on what the allocation of their effort and energy is going to be, and that decision will be based on how successful we are in terms of developing a focus for our activities in the college that is meaningful and meets student and industry needs and is manageable and gives people a feedback that they need in terms of results of their efforts. And that's really what we're struggling with.

The college has been resilient in the past and is staffed with well qualified and committed professionals. The problem has been identified and is beginning to be addressed as the next hill in Deception Pass. There is little doubt that the people of Olds College will overcome the latest struggle on their journey to excellence in proudly serving agriculture.

Chapter 10

Extrapolations and Reflections

> . . . the fundamental task . . . remains the same: to make people capable of joint performance by giving them common goals, common values, the right structure, and the ongoing training and development they need to perform and to respond to change. But the very meaning of this task is changed, if only because . . . the workforce [has been converted] from one composed largely of unskilled labourers to one of highly educated knowledge workers. (Drucker, 1988, p. 65)

Major and minor themes have been extrapolated from the Story of Olds College and have been connected with the literature and with the personal interpretations of the researcher. The themes are interconnected and are interdependent. Van Manen (1984) refers to themes as being like

> knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus experienced as meaningful wholes. Themes are like stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. It is by the light of these themes that we navigate and explore such universes. (p. 59)

These themes are the essence of the Olds College story and are "assertions that have a high degree of generality" (Spradley, 1979, p. 180). Spradley defines a cultural theme as "any cognitive principle, tacit or explicit, recurrent in a number of domains and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning" (p. 181). The Story of Olds College was organized around themes which had emerged from the data. Many of these themes formed chapters or sections of the Olds College story. Four major theme topics of Leadership, Consultation, Mandate, and Change and seven sub-themes have been identified for reflection.

Informants identified the following five critical incidents which in their view profoundly influenced the development of the college and are presented as they occurred chronologically: (1) the transfer of administrative control from the Department of Advanced Education to local board autonomy in 1978; (2) the appointment of the "Clean-Up" President; (3) the appointment of Dan Cornish; (4) the establishment of the college's mandate; and (5) the initiation of the industrial review process. The last three critical incidents are related to major themes which have surfaced from the data.

A description of the various forms of adaptation which emerged from the data and a discussion of the respective utility of the interpretive and adaptive approaches in understanding the Story of Olds will follow a discussion of the major and minor themes.

Theme One: Leadership: The President as Chief Mentor

Informants were unequivocal in identifying the appointment of Dan Cornish as the most significant critical incident in the development of Olds College in recent memory. Leadership behavior, according to Mangham (1988), impacts upon the organization, as it "affects the sense of purpose of everyone in the enterprise, energizing them or creating a sense of vulnerability and anxiety" (p. 55). Roueche et al. (1989) define leadership in the college setting as "the ability to influence, shape and embed values, attitudes and beliefs and behaviours consistent with increased commitment" to the college's mission (p. 34). President Cornish's values and philosophy have been described in Chapter 6 and encompass a belief in an "egalitarian, participant, democratic organization" and place great emphasis on "how we treat each other." Cornish's predominant interpretive strategic approach is evident throughout the Story of Olds College. He emphasizes "the preeminence" of the individual, the importance of the "consultation of stakeholders," and that through participation and involvement individuals will find meaning in what they do. He stresses the importance of holding "people up against standards of quality performance" and of recognizing change as an opportunity. Cornish has a vision for the college which is being articulated throughout the college.

In their extensive study of effective college presidents in the United States, Fisher, Tack, and Wheeler (1988) found that the most common personal trait shared by effective presidents is that they are completely committed to what they do, a trait which is evident in Cornish's leadership style. They report that effective presidents value education highly, as they "view the educational experience as a way of helping others improve themselves" (p. 81).

Cornish's interpretive strategy is based on his strong personal philosophy and conviction, combined with his awareness and sensitivity to culture. Dill (1982) views culture as being composed of symbol, myth, and ritual. Symbols are conceptualized as objects, acts, relationships, or linguistic formulations, which are ambiguous in that they stand for many meanings, and have the ability to motivate. Myth is defined as "the distinctive history of an institution or group embodied in written documents, reminiscences, legends, and physical properties of a place" (p. 311). Ritual, on the other hand, is seen as "a pattern sequence of social activity" which conveys meaning (p. 312).

The quotation from Drucker at the beginning of this chapter was excerpted from Cornish's draft revised Mission Statement which, in part, is a recommitment to the values mentioned above. The following are a few sample headings from the new document: "Integrity and Trust," "Shared

Information," "Responsive," "Innovation and Risk Taking," and "Continuous Development of College Staff." The opening statement which precedes the titles above illustrates the higher vision of the president:

> Organizations deal with the integration of people in a common venture, and so are deeply concerned with culture. The "what" of organizations is the same world-wide. "How" things are done can clearly vary from country to country and organization to organization.
>
> The challenge of excellence and quality lies in ensuring that the "what" of our college is being done in a thorough and competent fashion. "How" we achieve those ends will depend much on the value and culture of our society in general and our own college in particular. Thus it becomes extremely important to identify clearly the values we would adhere to in accomplishing our vision for Olds College. (Olds College draft revised mission statement)

Cornish is attempting to create a climate at Olds College which, in his words, says,

> Are you prepared to commit to this dream? And if you are, then let's work to create the conditions that allow us all to move ahead and learn in our own ways and recognize that's what happens in the classroom, and that's going to have a huge and major impact on the way you structure the learning that takes place.

The theme of Cornish's empowering and mentoring style was observed by the researcher and reported by most informants. Bennis and Nanus (1985) posit that the essence of organizational leadership is a style such as Cornish's which "pulls rather than pushes people on." This form of leadership style "empowers others to translate intention into reality and sustain it" (p. 80). Empowerment is a fundamental component of transformational leadership, the goal of which is not only to lead and inspire others to move toward a shared vision, but also to enable them to have a degree of ownership in the outcome (Roueche et al., 1989). Cameron and Ulrich (1986) view transformational leadership as a process of fundamental change:

> This change results in a new way of interpreting reality, in a different set of motives, in a higher vision of possibilities, not merely the implementation of alternative actions or plans. It is as much concerned with helping people to think differently about the problems they face as it is with creating solutions for those problems. It is as much the management of meaning as it is the management of substance. (p. 12)

Olds College has experienced a transformation under the leadership of Cornish. He created a readiness for change, managed the resistance which grew naturally from the mistrust of the previous administration, and articulated a vision through the mandate and mission statements. More importantly, Cornish modelled and encouraged openness and extensive consultation, which mobilized commitment and resulted in the institutionalization of a new order.

Complementary leadership - Dan and Bob. Empowerment runs through the complementary leadership sub-theme. Informants frequently referred to the leadership of the college as shared between the president and vice-president. Soft cop-hard cop, philosopher-production manager, and liberal arts education-vocational training are terms used to describe the contrasting styles of Cornish and Bigsby. Cornish empowers not only Bigsby, but also all members of the college to be leaders:

> Confusing! I said to the folks, "We're all leaders. We've got to learn both to lead and to follow, because good leaders need good followers. Some days I'll follow and you'll lead." And it's starting to generate that new cultural set of values that say, "It's okay; Bob's doing presidential stuff today. Isn't that great? It means that someday he may be able to be a president. So it's okay for me to be a leader, too."

Another perspective of each of Cornish's and Bigsby's predominant leadership styles is to view Cornish as the interpretive strategist and Bigsby as the adaptive strategist. Cornish's enactment of the changing environment as opportunity is an example of the management of meaning for college personnel. His use of the chuckwagon as a unifying symbol between the town and the college celebrating the rural cultural roots of both organizations is highly interpretive, as are his lifestyle and manner, which convey commitment and authenticity to the townspeople. Another example of Cornish's employment of an interpretive approach is the ritual retreat as a vehicle for renewal and attention to organizational learning, which are both interpretive strategies.

On the other hand, Bigsby's establishment of the industrial review process, adjustments to the academic organizational structure, modification of instructional delivery, and reconfiguring of programs are basically adaptive strategies. It must be emphasized that adaptive strategies are not inferior but are necessary complements to interpretive strategy. Adaptive strategies have been instrumental in the transformation of Olds College. The prominent cultural dimension of these strategies is environmental as elements of the college are being aligned to a complex, ever-changing set of constituency preferences. However, the vice-president is by no means limited to adaptive strategies; in fact, many aspects of his academic leadership are very interpretive. Similarly, much of the president's "obtaining resources from Edmonton" could be considered adaptive.

The mutual trust and respect of these two leaders make them unique and effective. Both administrators are committed to striving for the highest quality of instruction through unconditional support of the faculty and staff.

Theme Two: The Mandate: "Proudly Serving Agriculture"

When the president, after the CRISP College process, announced the college's mandate was to serve agriculture, "it was as if a collective sigh went through the organization." The mandate struck an accord and galvanized college personnel to action. The researcher's journal, dated January 29, 1989, reads, "The assertion of the right mandate was the nexus for all subsequent behavior and action." The unpredicted coalescing force of the correct mandate became a critical mass which overcame the frustration and inertia of unclear goals. An identity had been reestablished for the college. Cornish recalls it was quite simple in that all he did was to raise a mirror and have the organization look at the reflection of their traditions and culture, and there was instant acceptance. Many informants believed the establishment of the mandate to be the second most critical incident following the appointment of Cornish. The collective resolve of the college members had an effect on the resources. As Cornish remembers, "It seemed like once we became clear on that issue here, it became easier to argue the case in Edmonton. And so then the capital money started to flow."

Chaffee and Tierney (1988) in Collegiate Culture and Leadership Strategies propose a useful framework for understanding the relationship between culture and strategy, particularly in reference to the mandate. They conceptualize three dimensions of culture--structure, environment, and values--which are "highly interdependent and interpenetrating" (p. 18). The structural dimension incorporates programming, budgeting, and governing functions and includes both formal and informal decision-making processes. Communication networks, interaction among organization members, and activity patterns within and between subunits are factors within the domain of structure. Decision making and governance as related to leadership roles are important elements of structure and include aspects of consultation, delegation, and empowerment. Olds College would be viewed as having flexible structures and open communication.

The concept of environment in Chaffee and Tierney's (1988) model refers to both objective and enacted environments. They emphasize that environments can be created by organizations through "selective attention and interpretation" (p. 21). Therefore, what may appear hostile to one college may be opportunity to another. They note further that the way an organization perceives its environment conveys a reflection of its self-perception. Inherent in Cornish's perception of the environment as opportunity is a statement of confidence in the capacity of the organization.

Values are the third element in the framework, which involve the "beliefs, norms, and priorities" shared by the organization's participants (p. 20). These values are evident in the organization's mission and mandate and in the vision and quality of its leadership. Chaffee and Tierney (1988) stress that, beyond the transitional exchange between leader and followers, transformation leadership, or the degree to which the higher needs of organizational members are satisfied, is of particular interest. As noted earlier, the vision and philosophy of the president appeal to the higher needs of Olds College staff.

The three themes of time, space, and communication permeate the cultural model. Time pertains to the influence of tradition on individuals' present and future behavior. Comments by instructors such as "refocus, back to the soil" represented the pride staff had in the college's 75-year history and unique tradition in agriculture. Spatial relationships among individuals within the context of organization can yield insight into the three dimensions of structure, environment, and values. Space can be viewed symbolically or instrumentally. Aspects of organizational culture can be understood through communication, the manner whereby people interpret their realities and interact orally, non-verbally, or through writing. Administrators' urging managers to have face-to-face contact rather than writing memos is an example of a developing norm.

Each dimension and theme changes "according to its own internal logic but not independently of the others." Leaders strive to achieve a "dynamic equilibrium" between these different elements of organizational culture. "Leaders influence culture, and culture influences leaders" (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 21). Organizations are constantly in flux, and the leadership challenge is to seek a balance. Chaffee and Tierney propose

> that institutions need structures, enacted environments, and values that are congruent. Institutions also need to use time, space, and communication to reinforce and develop those congruences. When the dimensions are incongruent, one undermines the other instead of reinforcing it. The institution cannot develop momentum toward equilibrium when it is headed in diverging directions. . . . Strategy is a primary goal for leaders to use in seeking congruence. (p. 22)

Chaffee and Tierney (1988) refer to three types of strategy: linear, adaptive, and interpretive, which were described earlier and which correspond to the cultural dimensions of structure, environment, and values, respectively. The researchers stress that effective organizations require "effective functioning" of all three strategies and further emphasize the pre-eminence of interpretive strategies for higher education. The interpretive strategy, because of its emphasis on "communicating and interpreting institutional mission," is of critical importance to higher education. This was evident in the declaration and subsequent acceptance of the mandate at Olds College. In reference to the value of interpretive strategy, Chaffee and Tierney state:

> Its importance derives from its articulation of institutional values, which in turn provide a framework within which to incorporate and orient linear and adaptive approaches. In this respect, interpretive strategy is less a strategy in its own right than a way of implementing and intergrating a wide variety of strategic options [my italics]. (p. 24)

All three strategies are interactive and hierarchical, the top of the hierarchy being interpretive, followed by adaptive and linear strategies. Therefore, the interpretive model incorporates adaptive and linear elements. Leaders plan (linear) and adapt (adaptive) within the context of shared values and beliefs (interpretive). The key to effective leadership is to strike a dynamic equilibrium between the three. Culture portrays organizational identity, strategy consists of organizational action, and leadership is usually predicated upon individual action.

The researcher had a related insight which was recorded in a journal entry on January 13:

> It struck me that Dan is involved in a "macro-adaptation," a higher-order adaptation. He is not adapting his organization to the environment but a community of people to life! Embracing change, forging quality connections with not just business through industrial reviews, but all connections: students, community, business, and each other. We're talking something much bigger than adaptation! Truly interpretive management which involves management of meaning, values, attitudes, and symbols.

Chaffee (1984) noted that rapid recovery occurred when leaders used an interpretive strategy which directs adaptive strategy. After connecting with people internal and external to the organization, Cornish examined the culture and tradition of the college and made the interpretation that the college should not be cut from its roots, but that its roots should be affirmed in the mandate. The development of the acceptable interpretation and accompanying values in leadership constitute Cornish's management of meaning for the college. Tierney (1988), in summing up a case study, describes a similar situation to Olds College where, "by invigorating old roots and values with new meaning and purpose, the president . . . has largely succeeded in reconstructing tradition and encouraging a more effective organizational culture" (p. 9). The development of the agricultural mandate at Olds College provided a framework for the industrial reviews, instructional excellence, securing funds from Edmonton, marketing, and other adaptive and linear strategies. Findings obtained in this study confirm those of Chaffee and Tierney (1988), which demonstrated that interpretive strategy guides adaptive strategy.

Education versus vocational training. This sub-theme was identified as an ongoing tension which appeared to be intensifying. There were indicators that in their zeal to catch up with the change in industry, some factions in the college were overreacting to the recommendations of the industrial reviews. Overattention to adaptation was beginning to conflict with some educational values. Students complained about their rigorous schedules and subsequently their inability to participate in extracurricular activities, a curious anomoly, as some of the "people skills" identified as lacking in graduates such as interpersonal and communication skills can be obtained most effectively through a comprehensive student life program.

The researcher found occasional reference to the students as a product distasteful. Fortunately, the majority of staff are student oriented and are aware that an overemphasis on employability could be a disservice to the long-term interest of students.

Agriculture versus farming. The inability of the public to recognize the opportunities in agriculture due to the negative image of farming is a challenge for the college generally and for the manager of communications specifically, for whom college marketing is a responsibility. Throughout the college, staff from various programs referred to career opportunities in agribusiness and the college's high placement rate of 82% of the graduates. Media attention to farm closures has affected recruitment efforts. The college has adjusted its marketing strategy, but, given the limited budget and the tremendous image change required, anything short of a joint initiative by agricultural colleges and agribusiness will have minimal effect.

It is interesting to note that two marketing projects, the seventy-fifth-anniversary banner, "Proudly Serving Agriculture," and the new poster-publication image which emphasizes high-tech careers, have had a significant effect internally. College personnel identified with and were enthusiastic about both marketing efforts. Both productions had interpretive value because they reflected the shared meaning for Olds College personnel.

Theme Three: Participation: Consulting with Stakeholders

"Involve all personnel at all levels in all functions," urges Peters (1987). He believes administrators should be guided by the axiom "There are no limits to the ability to contribute on the part of a properly selected, well-trained, appropriately supported, and, above all, committed person" (p. 284). President Cornish has a fundamental belief similar to Peters', that "everyone has a right and a responsibility to be involved" and, further, that "consultation is the heart of the organization, and communication is the blood." The opportunity to provide input to the organization provides meaning for its members, which in turn has implications for improved commitment and quality. Cornish is employing an interpretive strategy of building the confidence level of the members of the organization, thereby lowering the resistance to change. The desired condition is achieved when, in his words, people say, "Gee, you know, I'm not threatened if I try to cope with change. If I am resistant and try to create an insisting calcification of attitude here against working with other people and learning, then I'll likely be hived off and chucked away."

Throughout the organization informants commented upon the consultation and communication imperative to the point of "communication strain." From the researcher's perspective the theme of consultation was ubiquitous and critical, since it is through their involvement that people of the college gain meaning. Participation, claimed one staff member, "gives you ownership, it gives you pride in achievement, it gives you a sense of community." Using a graphic metaphor, one manager referred to participation as providing deeper meaning for staff who had contributed, and, therefore, "they didn't waterski over the top of the water; they got down in and swam with the fishes."

The immediate backlash from the academic community to Bigsby's reorganization scheme can be explained through employing Chaffee's (1984) concept of "credibility crisis." By using the social contract analogy, participants in the organization over the years had "enacted the organization through their symbolic communications" (p. 221). They had come to expect to be consulted, particularly in matters which directly affected them. When faced with a document, even though a draft, into which they had no input, they felt a violation of the negotiated and shared norm of consultation. The covenant was broken, and an indignant outcry ensued. The administration responded appropriately by suspending all action pending a thorough review by stakeholders.

Consultation is not restricted to intraorganizational connections between staff, faculty, students, and board members; industrial consultation and connections with the local community are valued as well. Fundamental to adaptation of colleges is the emphasis "on the interconnectedness of things," states Martin (1984, p. 292). Martin notes the importance of a college's connections with precollegiate education, business and industry, museums and libraries, churches and synagogues. "It is the interconnectedness of things that characterizes the college and gives it distinctiveness" (p. 293). The following statement by Martin is made in reference to liberal arts colleges, although it applies equally well to Olds College:

> Colleges with a basis for action, with as much interest in a vital college culture as in efficient management systems; where leadership balances technical competence with human sensitivity, and there is encouragement for innovation within the tradition as well as a preoccupation favoring attention to the interconnectedness of things; where there is acceptance of symbiosis but also where moral seriousness and making meaning are a way of life--these colleges are the ones most likely to combine adaptation and distinctiveness.

President Cornish refers to consultation as "a moral imperative that runs through a healthy organization."

Linking with industry. The initiation of the industrial review process and the subsequent 22 reviews were mentioned by most informants as critical incidents and were viewed as vital in changing the college. An adaptive strategy, the review process aligns college programs with the changing environment. The reviews are the "cornerstone" to improvement of the quality of instruction in a vocational environment. Another example of empowerment by the administration, instructors are encouraged to find out how they are doing directly from industry. In reference to the faculty, a senior administrator commented, "The folks here have all the information; they just need to be shown where to locate it. And it's all there to be done. They've never had the encouragement to go ahead and be creative and innovative." Cornish sees the industrial review as a validation process. It is administration's job to provide faculty with "the outside input, which means they have a fairly healthy respect for their own ability to judge, . . . and if they [the instructors] don't finally own the conclusion, it's not going to work anyway: They're going to confound you!"

Beyond the formal process, the industrial review places college personnel and members of the agricultural business community in touch with each other. It is through these informal and personal contacts that the college obtains the necessary information and resources for successful adaptation.

Burnout, overload, and stress. The sub-theme of burnout and overload was raised by many informants. An administrator remarked, "We're being eaten alive," and another indicated that "we're being committeed to death." People commented that there was a tendency toward overinvolvement and that "something has to fall off the back of the truck because it can't hold anymore." President Cornish is aware of the need to priorize: "We need to say, 'These are what our priorities are,' and say no to those that don't fit those priorities."

Some of the people interviewed felt that burnout was self-inflicted and avoidable. One instructor had a different perspective as a result of his career as an Air Traffic Controller, where he saw "my fellow workers spitting up blood on the nightshift, and a couple died of heart attacks," a result of "bad stress; good stress is where you're having fun doing what you're doing, and you're managing that."

The stress factor has been recognized through the establishment of two quality circles, Workload Stress Recognition and System Planning, which attempt to co-ordinate activities collegewide to avoid conflicts and peak periods. Cornish realizes the emerging problem and has made the commitment "to start to realize the values we've articulated." Unless this is done, "it puts the lie to what you really believe in the organization." The college is approaching a credibility crisis which can be the impetus for change in interpretive strategy based on "the lack of satisfaction among participants regarding their reasons for organizing" (Chaffee, 1984, p. 221). Given the openness of the college and the sensitivity and intentions of the administration, it is likely that the burnout-overload problem will be addressed through consolidation initiatives.

Town-gown "rapprochement." Interpretive strategies have been most effective in redressing the ambivalent relationships between the town and college. Many informants remarked on the improved relations and attributed the change to the president. The chuckwagon campaign represents a culmination of the rapprochement. Other unifying symbols are the Aqua Leisure project and the pending annexation of the college by the town. One interviewee referred to the "symbiotic connection" between the town and college, a term used in a similar context earlier by Martin (1984).

The researcher was surprised at the impact of Cornish's personal behavior and that of his family on the community. His openness, approachability, and non-assuming persona signalled commitment and acceptability to the townsfolk. It is important to remember, as one informant observed, that "these things matter in a small rural community." The modelling of the president contributed greatly to the adaptation of the college to its local environment.

Theme Four: Change: Shedding the Protective Membrane

"The biggest challenge is for people to embrace change," declared a senior administrator. He continued, "We cannot not change in the business we're in." People had insulated themselves against the unpleasant condition of ambiguity. A senior administrator explained that it was as if they had "a membrane around them, that they had to be protected from themselves; they had to be protected from the outside world."

In order to change the college it was necessary to change the people, as organizations exist in the minds of people. Logos, policies, and buildings are hollow artifacts of the essence of organizations which are its participants. Gray (1988) makes the point succinctly: "Organizational change occurs only as a consequence of changes in the individual self-concept. It is the individual's view of himself that changes, not the organization" (p. 151). Weick (1979) comments, "If people want to change their environments they need to change themselves and their actions" (p. 152). Stated differently, Smircich and Stubbart (1985) indicate that people make sense of their situation by engaging in an interpretive process that forms the basis for their organized behavior (p. 728). Weick and Bougon (1986) state, "Organizations exist largely in the mind, and their existence takes the form of cognitive maps. Thus, what ties an organization together is what ties thoughts together" (p. 102).

An atmosphere of trust and unconditional support had been created at the college. The vice-president referred to his administrative strategy of "all carrot and no stick." Faculty was allowed to shed their membrane given the supportive climate and began to feel the environment directly through the industrial reviews. The turbulent, uncertain environment was interpreted by the senior administration as being an opportunity rather than a threat.

In President Cornish's words,

> The big wide world out there generates generic uncertainty for all of us. In other words, you can't get comfortable, and rather than treating that as an automatic source of stress, I think we have to somehow adopt the attitude that says those kinds of circumstances create opportunities for us, and they create the joy of facing new challenges and failing and succeeding. I think it's that attitudinal shift that the world out there is presenting to us that's the most significant thing. I think if we get the right attitude in place, that change is a fact of life, and it's not a threat, it's a challenge, and it's an opportunity, and it's a condition; it is neutral, to some extent. How we respond to it is what tells the difference in terms of quality [my italics]. This is going to be, I suspect, the hardest thing to inculcate into this organization, is to welcome change with wide open arms, recognizing that it's both an opportunity and a threat.

Defining reality in ways that are sensible and understandable to those who are led is the process of leadership (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). The management-of-change imperative runs throughout the institution. A faculty member, in response to the question "What do you mean when you say 'manage change'?" replied,

> Not to be afraid of precedent; not to be afraid to try something new; resist the temptation to remain at the status quo. All the way up and down the line we see this acceptance of change. We sometimes are shown; it is put on the platter

> for us. The Instructional Design Center: We didn't have to ask for that; administration saw the need and supplied that. Change with our students needs; listening to industry and finding out what they need, and for us to be able to respond and come around there and make that change in a hurry. . . . We have the attitude towards change--responding to the big world out there in time [my italics].

The interpretive, enacted perspective of organizations is much more helpful in understanding the dynamics of Olds College than the organization-environment adaptive approach. A major limitation of adaptation is that it can "be stated retrospectively, never prospectively" (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985, p. 728). It is not useful for dealing with day-to-day administrative issues, while, on the other hand, the interpretive perspective enables administrators to manage their organizations based on their knowledge of events and situations which are always open to multiple interpretations. "Organizations exist for individuals only in terms of their experience and the understanding that comes from reflecting on that experience." Gray (1988) states further that "each individual creates his own organization as an experience which consolidates in reflection" (p. 150). Cornish and Bigsby have provided a vision of accepting and "embracing change" which individuals in the organization have interpreted and, within the supportive climate, have changed themselves, thereby transforming the organization.

Instructional support. Organizational change at Olds College is predicated upon support. All informants commented upon the support by the administration for change efforts. The administration views professional development as "an investment" in human capital. "You can't just keep drawing soil from the land; you have to invest back into it." The researcher was struck by the power in creating a healthy organizational climate through the provision of support mechanisms.

Cornish and Bigsby are strong advocates of support services which they view as being key "to institutional strength and the development of a quality learning environment." Peters (1987) notes that "despite lip service about people-as-our-most-important asset, we value hardware assets over people." He enjoins managers to "train everyone--lavishly" (p. 324). He believes that value added will increasingly come from people who are trained and continuously retrained.

The administration of Olds College is very circumspect "even in hinting that someone isn't doing a good job." Encouraging change has to be done in a helpful way. "There is no way that it can be done in a punitive manner. It's got to be all carrot, and there's got to be no stick!"

The four major themes which surfaced from the data have been presented. Each major theme had accompanying minor themes as follows. The first theme, "Leadership: The President as Chief Mentor," was accompanied by the minor theme "Complementary leadership - Dan and Bob." The second pivotal theme, "The Mandate: 'Proudly Serving Agriculture,'" had the two subthemes of "Education versus vocational training" and "Agriculture versus farming." The third central theme was "Participation: Consulting with Stakeholders" and had three subthemes: "Linking with industry," "Burnout, overload, and stress," and "Town-gown rapprochement." The final major theme, "Change: Shedding the Protective Membrane," was accompanied by the subtheme of "Instructional support."

The chapter concludes with the upcoming discussion of the various forms of adaptive strategy which were found in the data. Examples of each type of adaptation which was presented in the literature review were evident in this study.

Reflections on Adaptation Strategies and Processes

Evidence of every form of organizational adaptation was described by the informants' interpretations. A brief overview of the various perspectives with examples from the data highlight the conceptual spectrum of adaptation. Zammuto, Whetton, and Cameron's (1983) concept of population ecology pivots around the concept of niche. Clearly, the unique agricultural mandate of Olds College constitutes a niche in the postsecondary system. This approach incorporates the perspective of an intractable environment which, to some extent, applies to Olds College in that the mandates of Red Deer and Mount Royal Colleges preclude Olds College's venturing into a more comprehensive program offering. Certainly the disposition of Advanced Education's program division defined the niche shape. The college was "locked into a program base," and even if the organization could have changed, "the external environment wouldn't have let you be that way, because the competition geographically and economically was stacked against the place," stated a manager.

Life cycle theory views the organization as moving through the stages of creativity and leadership, collectivity, formalization, and elaboration of structure. Cameron and Ulrich (1986) state that organizations tend to remain largely the same because change rarely occurs without discomfort (p. 13). They claim further that organizations which are unable to progress through the stages to maintain adaptability become fixed and "non-adaptable, and organizational demise is a frequent result of the resistance forces that derail change" (p. 13). Creating readiness for change involves five strategies which were described in the data: (1) comparison with referents (other colleges), (2) personnel changes, (3) creation of a new language (industrial review, instruction design, core, and so forth), (4) development and training of organization members, and (5) identification of external threats. By creating readiness and overcoming resistance, the leadership has facilitated the maturation of the college.

Contingency theory falls under the Strategic Choice grouping and predicts a relation between structure-environment match and performance. Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) explored how organizations accommodate uncertainty in the environment by modifying their structures, thereby "modeling organizational traits and orientations with environmental features" (p. 208). Organizational adaptation is achieved through a reactive management role and involves internal structural alignment with the environment. The academic reorganization proposed by Bigsby was intended to reflect the program recommendations from industry and to accommodate the "rationalization" initiatives of the Department of Advanced Education. College structures were aligned with the environmental requirements.

Resource dependency theory is a perspective which is defined as organizations maximizing their power through the acquisition of resources. By minimizing resource uncertainty, organizations adapt to the environment singly or collectively. Scott (1987) maintains that the resource dependent approach is most useful in accounting for the adaptation of a single organization over a short period of time. An example of resource dependency theory at Olds College is the establishment of a Foundation Office whose task it is to raise funds and particularly to access the matched funding program of the government through the Heritage Fund. Much of the President's external relations effort is directed at securing the necessary capital funds from Edmonton.

Institutionalization theory posits that conforming forces in the environment encourage organizations to align their structures based on structuralized myths. By imitating other organizations, the legitimacy of the organization is enhanced, therefore increasing its chance of survival. DeMaggio and Powell (1983) have labelled this phenomenon as "institutional isomorphism." The Colleges Act, the network of public colleges in Alberta, the various councils (Council of Presidents), and the rules and regulations of the Department of Advanced Education have influenced colleges, even those with unique mandates such as Olds College, to be very similar in structure and behavior.

Organizational learning theory offers the perspective that organizations can adapt through learning. The industrial review process, the increased effectiveness of the Academic Council, and the improved decision-making process through "flattening the organization" at Olds College are examples of organizational learning. Managers in organizations who successfully employ the principles of organizational learning confront their own basic assumptions and look for contributions from others who are competent. Cornish and Bigsby with their commitment to "egalitarian, participative democracy" encourage the contribution of all personnel and, in so doing, increase the college's adaptive capacity.

The strategic choice approach to adaptation is typified by Cameron's (1983) three categories of strategy: domain defense, domain offense, and domain creation. The fundamental aim of the strategic choice approach according to Cameron (1984) is to expand information gathering while limiting information-processing requirements in order to make the choices more reasonable. The CRISP College planning process was a prototypical strategic planning process which was instrumental in Olds College's adaptation to the environment.

Random organizational action was also identified as having adaptive value, according to some theorists. Luck, superstitious organizational learning, adaptation by chance, garbage can decision making, and the myth of rationality are a few non-rational approaches cited in the literature. The researcher found examples of this type of behavior in the data. In reference to the inception of the industrial reviews, one staff member remarked, "It's bizarre how they all worked, because, actually, it's got to be somebody's genius planning, or else a lot of coincidence in there, too, because it's like all these things came together." The industrial review process seemed to have materialized without careful planning.

Another example of unintended consequences is the far-reaching effect of the college's CRISP process and subsequent mission and mandate. Cornish admitted that he was not conscious of the tremendous value in the affirmation of the college's mission in securing resources from Edmonton and, further, of the energizing effect it had on college personnel.

Further, the magnitude of the effect of establishing the mandate was unexpected. In another case, the communications manager referred to the serendipity involved in designing the "Proudly Serving Agriculture" banner. Again, the magnitude of the chord the motto struck with college personnel was unintended, as the original purpose was to advertise the seventy-fifth anniversary externally.

Synergy occurs when people's actions become integrated and purposeful. Behavior then becomes transcendent--beyond description and predictability. Intentionality notwithstanding, non-rational happenings at Olds College have had an adaptive function.

The researcher found evidence in the data of all forms of adaptive processes discussed in the review of the literature. Regardless of whether adaptation or selection is the principle factor in determining organizational survival, both contingency theorists and population ecologists "are at one in believing that the major problems facing modern organizations stem from changes in the environment" (Morgan, 1986, p. 236). It is important to note that most adaptation theories draw on the organismic analogy of the organization surrounded by an objective environment. The researcher concurs with Tolbert (1985), who concludes that "organizational phenomena are much too complex to be adequately described by any single theoretical approach" (p. 12). Interpretive strategy and the perspective of a subjective theory of organizations has figured prominently in the four major themes and seven sub-themes presented earlier. Evidence was found for the presence of each formulation of adaptation, although the interpretive approach was most preferred and more closely reflected the Olds College experience. The strengths and weaknesses of the adaptive and interpretive approaches merit discussion and will be addressed in the upcoming final chapter.

Chapter 11

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

This chapter begins with an overview of the design and a summary of the study's findings. This is followed by a section describing the conclusions and a discussion of the conclusions. The chapter concludes with suggested implications of this study for administrative practice, theory building, and further research.

Overview of the Study: Purpose, Methodology, and Design

Purpose of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate, describe, and explain the adaptive process whereby an Alberta college adapted to its environment. The study specifically addressed the following question: What strategies does the leadership in a college use to manage the organization? Other subsidiary questions which guided the research were:

1. Who are the college leaders, and what constitutes the college's leadership?
2. What strategies were used by college leaders?
   (a) What adaptive strategies were used?
   (b) What interpretive strategies were used?
3. What are the important factors in "managing" the college?
4. Which incidents were most critical in changing the college?
5. How did the various elements interact to produce organizational change?

Research methodology and design. The nature of the research questions directed the researcher to adopt an historical case study approach which focused upon the development of a particular organization over time. The study was interpretive, within the naturalistic paradigm. The tenets of Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism, Mangham's (1988) "dramaturgical approach," and Smircich and Morgan's (1982) view of leadership as "the management of meaning" and organization as "networks of managed meanings" (p. 270) provided the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

Therefore, rather than employing a predetermined design with an explicit hypothesis, through a modified progressive nomination technique, the design emerged as the study progressed. The study was shaped by the research question and subsidiary questions which were incorporated into the semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 2). As the data were gathered, insights and meaning took form which guided subsequent data collection.

The data were collected over a five-month period in an Alberta public college. The researcher made 10 trips to the site for periods of one to four days, during which time he overnighted in the college residence.

Data consisted of three types: documents, which included two textbooks on the history of the college, college publications, and photographs; observation, which included meetings, lunches, and the daily routines of campus life; and interviews, which were of the formal and informal variety. The researcher conducted 25 formal interviews, two of which were group interviews. The interpretations and perceptions of college personnel obtained through the interviews were the major source of research data. These interviews were taperecorded and generated in excess of 1,300 pages of transcriptions. Interview transcripts were returned to informants for verification. The investigator kept a personal journal in which insights, reflection, and a general outline of proceedings were recorded. In addition, informal interviews and observer's comments were recorded in another diary of fieldnotes. These data were analyzed through coding, category development, and subsequent saturation and the identification and eventual linking of themes. One hundred and one initial categories were identified and were gradually reduced to 46 and eventually to 15 categories. The 15 categories were linked together to form a history of the college, from which emerged four major themes and seven subthemes. While in the field and throughout the period of data analysis, related literature was explored in order to enhance analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 153).

Summary of the Findings

As indicated earlier, the central question which guided the case study was: What strategies does the leadership in a college use to manage the organization? The findings in summary form and brief discussions of them are presented as responses to the five subsidiary questions of the study.

1. Who are the college leaders, and what constitutes the college's leadership?

The most important critical incident reported by interviewees was the appointment of Dan Cornish as president. His leadership was viewed by all as being instrumental in the transformation of the college. Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1988) state that change can be successfully accomplished through "democratic, participative, relations-oriented, and considerate leadership" (p. 51). These characteristics were evident in Cornish's leadership qualities. Roueche et al., in reference to the transformational leader, observe further that "implicit in this leadership approach is the leader's ability to transmit vision into reality, mission into action, and philosophy into practice" (p. 51). They indicate that transforming leadership occurs when one or more individuals interact with others so that leaders and followers "raise one another to higher levels of moderation and morality" (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989, p. 35). Cornish and Vice-President Bigsby demonstrated the leadership attributes which are associated with transformational leadership in the literature. Roueche et al. posit that a transformational leader must "possess the synergy to create something new out of something old; out of an old vision, this leader must develop and communicate a new vision and get others not only to see the vision, but also to commit to it themselves" (p. 50). It would be misleading to infer that all staff at Olds College have ownership of a shared vision. Nevertheless, sufficient members have committed to the vision of excellence in proudly serving agriculture to conclude that Olds College has experienced a transformation under the leadership of Cornish and Bigsby.

Bigsby and Cornish have complementary leadership styles which have been very effective in their administration of the college. Cornish is reflective, philosophical, and uses mainly interpretive strategies, while Bigsby, on the other hand, is a man of action who thrives on change and employs primarily adaptive strategies. Cornish has a sensitivity to and awareness of the respective and shared cultures of the town and the college. The chuckwagon campaign, the pending annexation of the college by the town, and the proposed Aqua Leisure Center are poignant examples of his recognition of culture. Cornish's leadership style is characterized by empowerment. He is committed to "egalitarian, participative, democratic" decision making and is attempting to flatten the organization, to push decisions to the lowest possible level where the knowledge of the consequences of the decision is clearest. He believes it is important to share ideas with people and get them to work on them so that the final decision is believed to be their own.

Bigsby is considered to be a very competent academic administrator who is interested in providing relevant competency-based education in the area of agriculture. He was referred to as the "critical linchpin." Bigsby is credited with initiating the industrial reviews, restructuring the academic division to align it with industry, encouraging the development of extension services, and developing comprehensive instructional support mechanisms, all examples of adaptive strategy. He has made great efforts "to cut across the turf" of disciplines and departments in striving to integrate programs and to develop an academic core.

Leadership at Olds College was not restricted to the president and vice-president. Cornish reported that he had said to staff, "We're all leaders. We've got to learn both to lead and to follow, because good leaders need good followers. Some days I'll follow, and you'll lead." A high quality of leadership was evident at all levels. The deans were well recruited for their technical expertise and sound interpersonal skills. Department heads and co-ordinators with whom the researcher had contact were committed and very able. The decision-making processes appeared very consultative, and everyone participated. While there is a hierarchy, people at all levels are encouraged to contribute. The phrase "flattening the organization" is heard throughout the college and implies a non-hierarchical norm. Administration is consciously trying to force decisions lower in the organization so that, at times, most people in the college can try their hand at leadership.

2. Which incidents are most critical in changing the college?

Five critical incidents were identified by informants as being pivotal in influencing the development of Olds College. These incidents were particularly useful to the researcher in data collection, as they were nodules of rich experience which provided clues to subsequent data sources.

The first incident was the transfer of administrative control of the college from the Department of Advanced Education to local board autonomy in 1978, which ended more than 65 years of direct government management, since the Department of Agriculture administered Olds College from 1911 until 1971 when the responsibility was shifted to Advanced Education. The transfer of control from Edmonton to a local board allowed the college to chart its own destiny.

The second critical incident was the new board's appointment of the former "Clean-Up President," whose administration style upset campus equanimity which had developed under the government bureaucracy. In the perception of informants, college departments had become isolated, and the college lacked direction. The newly appointed president began the process of developing an administrative infrastructure and tried, without success, to lead the college towards adopting a comprehensive community college mandate. His four-year tenure ended in 1982, the year in which

Dan Cornish was appointed as president. Cornish's appointment was the third and most significant event as indicated by interviewees. His philosophy, leadership style, and recruitment efforts were largely responsible for transforming the college. Two years into his seven-year tenure at Olds College, Cornish, through the CRISP College strategic planning process, declared that the college's mandate was to serve agriculture and the agricultural service industry. Most informants agreed that this fourth critical event was extremely important in providing a focus for instructional and administrative activity at Olds College.

The last critical event was the introduction of the industrial review process, which was fundamental in aligning instructional programs with the needs of industry. It was through the industrial reviews that faculty could keep abreast of current developments in the rapidly changing agricultural environment.

The development of an extension division, the openness of the administration, instructional support, and staff burnout were other important factors which contributed to organizational change at Olds College. However, the five critical incidents outlined above were deemed especially significant by the people interviewed.

3. What strategies are used by college leaders?

(a) What adaptive strategies are used?

(b) What interpretive strategies are used?

(a) What adaptive strategies are used by college leaders? Four major orientations to adaptation were identified in the literature: population ecology, strategic choice, random organization action, and interpretive theory. Strategic choice was subsequently divided into the following six theoretical groupings: life-cycle, contingency, resource dependency, institutionalization, organizational learning, and organizational strategy. Evidence of adaptive strategies reflecting each conceptualization of adaptation were found in the data and are briefly outlined below.

The population ecology perspective was reflected in the adaptive strategy the college adopted in defining its unique agricultural niche. Among other factors, the mandate of neighboring post-secondary institutions, the program mix at Olds College, and the disposition of Advanced Education were forces in the environment which created the niche. Enrollments in agricultural colleges in Alberta and across Canada had plummeted. Olds College has managed to increase its enrollments slightly, but the threat of the "erosion" of student supply influenced the college to develop a realignment strategy through the industrial reviews and subsequent programmatic and structural adjustments.

Within the strategic choice grouping, the life-cycle approach to adaptation views organizations as evolving or maturing through different stages. Adaptability is achieved by the organization's progressing through different growth phases. However, change usually brings discomfort; hence the tendency for organizations to remain the same. By opening Olds College to the environment and by encouraging staff to accept change, leaders were employing adaptive strategies. A high priority assigned to professional development by the administration, for example, serves an adaptive function, as it equips staff to accommodate environmental change and thereby allows the organization to grow. Overall, college leaders have facilitated the maturation of the college by creating readiness for change and by overcoming resistance.

Contingency theory predicts a relation between structure-environment match and performance. From this perspective the administration's structural and programmatic adjustments to the organization are adaptive strategies in reaction to environmental requirements. A related perspective is the resource dependency approach, which is predicated upon the concept that organizations strive to maximize their power through acquiring resources and thereby reducing resource uncertainty. This adaptive strategy was used by Cornish with great success. The articulation of the mandate to the senior government officials in Edmonton was an example of an effective adaptive strategy in obtaining capital funds.

There are many conforming forces in the organizational field of Alberta post-secondary education which have an adaptive value for colleges. Institutional isomorphism takes the three forms of mimetic (imitation), coercive (force), and normative (the adoption of norms). Examples of the adaptive forces inherent in institutionalization theory at Olds College are budget guidelines, the Colleges Act, and the rules and regulations of Advanced Education.

Organizational learning theory posits that organizations can adapt through learning. The retreats, the industrial review process, the increased effectiveness of the Academic Council, and the improved decision-making process through "flattening the organization" are all examples of adaptive strategy within the domain of organizational learning. The fundamental tenet of the organizational strategy approach, the last conceptualization within the strategic choice cluster, is the notion that the organization can purposively enact or define its domain and influence the environment in which it operates. Within the strategic choice grouping, this approach ascribes the most power to managers to influence their organization's fortunes. The CRISP College planning process was vital in adapting Olds College to its environment and is an excellent example of strategic planning.

Random organizational action, while non-rational and unpredictable, has an adaptive value and is recognized in the literature. Evidence of luck, serendipity, and coincidence were reputed by informants to be responsible for successes in securing capital funds from Edmonton, the marketing strategies, the industrial reviews, and the consequences of the agricultural mandate, all of which were adaptive.

The Extension Division of Olds College, because it is not bound by the constraints of "regular" programming, is a network of adaptive strategies. Examples of every form of adaptation can be found in this division in its response to demands from the environment. As a result of its flexibility, Extension is seen to be the ultimate adaptive mechanism in aligning the college with the environment, and the senior administration has great expectations that Extension will become "the other college."

The foregoing adaptive strategies are examples of the many which were found in the data. The strategies were generally used in conjunction with others. Chaffee (1985a) states that "an integrated set of strategic actions" is probably more preferable to strategic action which is "isolated or disjointed" (p. 157). Adaptive strategies were found to be particularly effective when used with interpretive strategies, the subject of the next description of findings from the study.

(b) What interpretive strategies were used by college leaders? Interpretation is the process whereby "information is given meaning and actions are chosen" (Daft & Weick, 1984, p. 254). An interpretive strategy is employed when "organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favor the organization" (Chaffee, 1985b, p. 94). An organization, from an interpretive perspective, is viewed as a network of interacting participants who experience shared meaning. The leader manages meaning through communication, symbols, and rituals.

The adaptive approach is based on the organismic analogy, while, on the other hand, the interpretive approach is predicated upon a social contract analogy. Chaffee (1985b) has drawn attention to the similarity between her notion of three models of strategy, namely, linear, adaptive, and interpretive, and Boulding's (1956) General Systems Theory, which conceptualizes a hierarchy of systems in three groupings of mechanical, biological, and cultural systems (see Figure 7). Systems higher on the hierarchy have subsumed lower systems; therefore, the interpretive strategy can contain elements of linear and adaptive strategy. The researcher concurs with Chaffee (1984) and Keeley (1980) that the organismic, adaptive strategy has limitations. The organization is treated as an entity, a whole, which makes it difficult to accommodate individuals. Therefore, goals are viewed as being of the organization, while the social contract analogy incorporates the will of the organization's participants, and goals are seen as being for the organization. Adaptive strategies are unwieldy, as they are unable to account for organizational culture and its various aspects. However, the interpretive approach, which emphasizes the process whereby meaning is attached to information, is most effective in understanding organizational culture.

As mentioned earlier, Cornish's leadership was typical of that which the literature recognizes as transformational leadership and is highly interpretive, as it is based on creating a higher vision of meaning than that which previously existed in the organization. Cornish's use of interpretive strategy was encountered throughout the study. He is committed to a philosophy of administration which is typified by consultation and involvement of stakeholders within the college and in the local and agricultural community. He values an "egalitarian, participative, democratic" organization which places great emphasis on "how we treat each other." This value is evident in such decision-making processes and structures as Academic Council, budgeting, and all staff meetings. Staff are encouraged to participate in decision making to the point of being overextended. President Cornish stresses the importance of high standards and quality performance. His empowering style is an example of what Bennis and Nanus (1985) refer to as a form of leadership which "pulls rather than pushes people on" (p. 80).

Cornish uses symbols frequently in his interpretive leadership repertoire. Small symbols such as his ever-present toothpick, repairing his truck, avoidance of podiums and microphones, casualness with staff, the Friday night family ritual supper in town, and his "call me Dan" manner all convey meanings of approachability, openness, and informality. Other symbols such as the chuckwagon campaign, the Learning Resource Center, and the pending Aqua Leisure Center are of a larger magnitude and symbolize, respectively, the joint celebration of rural cultural roots, a caring and the recognition of the need for decent facilities, and town-gown rapprochement and trust in addressing mutual needs.

The administration of Olds College is collectively enacting the agricultural environment as opportunity. Staff and faculty were encouraged to "shed their membranes" and, given the supportive climate, began to relate directly with industry through the industrial reviews. The continued development of a comprehensive instructional support program has been integral to the management of change.

The most significant interpretive strategy was the identification of the agricultural mandate. As a result of the CRISP College strategic planning process, President Cornish announced that the college was adopting an agricultural mandate. The revitalization of the agricultural history and tradition as a central theme in the college's culture was pivotal in the organization's turnaround. The college staff easily identified with the mandate, as it had meaning for them. This shared meaning allowed the administration to interpret a high vision, and, in so doing, it transformed the college. Nevertheless, there are factions of staff within the college who are unhappy with the exclusive agricultural mandate, and some feel threatened. It is doubtful, however, that many would deny that Olds College has experienced a significant transformation.

4. What are the important factors in "managing" the college?

The two major factors with which the leadership of Olds College had to contend were the organization's environment and culture. Martin (1984) envisions management as having to accommodate the two forces: "External pressure must be channelled like water through a spillway, thereby generating power to illuminate the internal structure and purpose of the organization" (p. 289). March (1984) and Tierney (1988) acknowledge the significance of the two influences. March observes that organizations exist on two levels: "The first is the level of action where we cope with the environment we face; the second is the level of interpretation where we fit our history into an understanding of life" (p. 18). Tierney recognizes the importance of environment but highlights the influence of the "internal dynamic" of culture; therefore, administrators must be concerned with "decisions, action, and communication on an environmental and symbolic level" (p. 3). It is important, therefore, that administrators create a balance between "adaptation" and "interpretation" factors.

The environment of Olds College is complex and uncertain and is characterized by changing technology and developing knowledge. Informants identified interacting elements in the environment which influenced the college: geography, weather, technology, economics, government, politics, external agencies, and the recruitment of staff and students from the social environment. A brief summary of the abovementioned elements follows. The college is located in a fertile, rural area in south-central Alberta which is halfway between Calgary and Red Deer, in each of which is situated a comprehensive community college. Fluctuations in weather patterns affect the fortunes of agriculture, which, in turn, affect student supply and the general agricultural economy. The economy is also affected by world markets, government subsidies, and interest rates, for example, which determine attitudes towards agriculture and agricultural training. As with most industrial environments, technology in the agricultural sector is changing rapidly, which has significant implications for Olds College.

Another major environmental force is the priorities of politicians and government. Diversification efforts away from a resource-dependent economy placed Olds College in a better position than when the focus of activity was oil and gas. Various external agencies such as the Department of Advanced Education, professional societies, unions, and the Apprenticeship Branch also exert powerful influences on the college. The recruitment of staff and students profoundly affects the social and educational climate of the college. The profile of the "new" student is much different from that of the "traditional" student with which faculty is familiar. The quality of the relationship between the town and the college is an important factor in the functioning of the college. Informants have referred to the symbiotic relationship between the town and the college, as they are mutually dependent for goods and services.

Environmental forces are constantly in flux and interact with each other. Therefore, the environment is a major external factor to be considered in the leadership of Olds College.

However, another major factor, internal to the college, is its organizational culture. Dill (1982) defines organizational culture as "the shared beliefs, ideologies, or dogma of a group which impel individuals to action and give their actions meaning" (p. 307). Olds College's internal structure of symbols, shared meanings, and traditions has been an important factor in shaping its culture. The college has a rich 75-year history of service to agriculture, from the early years where young women and men were prepared to return to the farm until more recently when the college responded to the demands of industry through specialized programs beginning with Horticulture in 1965.

The fundamental importance of traditional rural values is evident at

Olds College. For example, informants commented on the family influence upon students which surfaced in instructional settings, where faculty could sense family values and attitudes. The significance of graduation, the Alumni Association (of which many students' parents are members), and parental inquiries of the Registrar's Office regarding the progress of their daughters or sons are reflective of the value attached to family.

The researcher encountered traces of traditional rural attitudes towards the dominance of male roles. Students commented upon some experiences they had on the part of faculty, and a few informants expressed frustration with the lack of women in adminstration, although there was evidence that gender stereotypes were changing.

The banner "Proudly Serving Agriculture" captured the attitudes and values shared by the staff at Olds College. Legends, stories, special terms, and even the pranks reflected the college's rich agricultural tradition. An increasing number of staff and students are coming to the college from non-agricultural backgrounds, which has influenced some personnel to consider an orientation or compulsory course which emphasizes the agricultural tradition of Olds College. This concept of the transmission of the core values of an institution is referred to by Dill (1982) as "social integration" (p. 304).

The administration of the college has successfully balanced the internal, cultural influences and those of the external environment. Typically, interpretive strategies reflected cultural dimensions of the college, while adaptive strategies usually related to the environment. The leaders of Olds College have been effective in achieving a "dynamic equilibrium" between the contributing influences (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 21).

5. How do the various elements interact to produce organizational change?

The various elements--leadership, adaptive and interpretive strategies, and cultural and environmental factors--converge to form the four themes of "Leadership: The President as Chief Mentor," "The Mandate: 'Proudly Serving Agriculture,'" "Participation: Consulting with Stakeholders," and "Change: Shedding the Protective Membrane," all of which are described in Chapter 10, "Extrapolations and Reflections." The thread which runs through the four themes is interpretive strategy. As an organizing principle, it provides meaning for the college constituents.

Interpretive strategy used by the president provided the direction for other leaders whose primary strategies were adaptive and linear. Examples of specific strategies and particularly the complementary leadership of Cornish and Bigsby have been discussed earlier. The most effective use of interpretive strategy was in the creation of the vision for the college which was developed as a result of the CRISP College process. Cornish articulated the mandate and added to it his vision and values of excellence, consultation, learning to learn, change as opportunity, empowerment, and trust and respect for one another. It is important to note that the actions of the president were all taken within the context of the college's history, tradition, and culture. Through these interpretations, the various constituents of Olds College shared a common understanding of the purpose and value of the college. With this common meaning, linear, planning strategies and adaptive strategies which aligned activities in the college with agribusiness could be co-ordinated and implemented.

Therefore, the researcher concurs with the observation of Chaffee and Tierney (1988) that "interpretive strategy is less a strategy in its own right than a way of implementing and integrating a wide variety of strategic options" (p. 24). The most effective use of the strategies is to use them together. The findings of this study were similar to those found by Chaffee (1984) in her study of 14 liberal arts colleges which demonstrated that the interpretive model appeared to account for a significant turnaround or transformation of the organization.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were derived from the findings and their subsequent analysis:

1. The president employed interpretive strategies in developing and articulating a shared vision, thereby preparing the way for change. His leadership was characterized by openness, the effective management of meaning, and empowerment in forging a new order. This type of leadership behavior is recognized in the literature as transformational leadership.
2. The effective use of symbols by the president was an important component of his interpretive strategy.
3. Multiple adaptive strategies such as the industrial reviews, program reorganization, the acquisition of resources, and the development of a comprehensive extension division were used in conjunction with interpretive strategies and were critical in college turnaround.
4. Engagement of college stakeholders through consultation, participation, and their involvement in decisions which affected them was instrumental in the development of shared meaning. Quality

connections between college personnel and externally with the town and with agricultural industry were important in creating a healthy organizational climate.

5. The leadership skills required to change the college were found to be different from those required for maintenance of the organization.
6. The findings of the study support the literature that organizational change occurs when the people who make up the organization change. A climate of trust and personal and professional support was a necessary precondition for the college leaders to successfully translate the threat of a rapidly changing environment to opportunity for college personnel.
7. The identification of critical incidents in this study was a useful method of obtaining insights into the intensity of events and the constellation of activity which surrounded them.
8. College leaders had to contend with two major factors: the internal influence of culture, which was managed primarily through interpretive strategies, and the external influence of the environment, which was managed primarily through adaptive strategies.
9. Interpretive strategies provided a framework for adaptive and linear strategies. The development of a unique mission and mandate which reflected the tradition and culture of the college provided the focus for subsequent strategies.

Discussion

The original question which directed the study was "How does leadership in a college use interpretive and adaptive strategies to manage the organization?" The researcher's initial conceptualization had subsumed interpretive strategy or symbolic action under the broad rubric of adaptation according to the schema of Cameron (1983, 1984, 1986).

Cameron's (1984) definition of organizational adaptation as the "modifications and alterations in the organization or its components in order to adjust to change in the external environment" (p. 123) was adopted for this study. The concept of adaptation was useful in understanding the exogenous forces of Olds College but was inadequate in explaining the equally important cultural forces from within the organization.

The concept that interpretive strategy guides adaptive strategy has been reiterated throughout the last two chapters. Chaffee's (1985b) Three Models of Strategy and Boulding's (1956) General Systems Theory (modified) place the interpretive cluster at a different, more complex, cultural level than the lower, adaptive, biological level and thus move the analogy from one of an organism to that of a social contract. Weick (1985) makes the interesting suggestion that the concepts of strategy and culture may be substituted for each other. Strategy is viewed by Chaffee and Tierney (1988) as "a way of looking, listening and thinking," a perspective which is remarkably close to a definition of culture (p. 22). Indeed, Weick posits that the concepts of culture and strategic plans may be asymetrically substitutable. He states, "Culture can substitute for plans more effectively than plans for culture" (p. 383). Culture accepts the notion of symbols, ritual, and myths, and, in so doing, observes Weick (1985), "whittles the concept of rationality down to size. . . . culture treats the social character of organizations as axiomatic" (p. 387). He comments further that by adopting the metaphors of culture, researchers "avoid reification, identify a phenomenon that can be observed in individuals, and preserve their ability to aggregate individual reports into higher level determinants" (p. 383). To conceptualize interpretive strategy within the context of adaptation is confusing. The frame of reference is different.

The conundrum is succinctly stated by Blumer (1969), who claims that organizational theorists, as

> students of human society, will have to face the question of whether their preoccupation with categories of structure and organization can be squared with the interpretive process by means of which human beings, individually and collectively, act in human society. (p. 89)

The vocabulary of adaptation, which includes such terms as organizational boundaries, boundary spanning and scanning, and organizational alignment with the environment, reflects a fundamentally different view of organizations than does the interpretive, cultural perspective. Extending Chaffee's (1985b) analogy of asking a geologist (linear), a climatologist (adaptive), and a poet (interpretive) to give their respective renditions of the Grand Canyon, subsuming interpretive strategy under the rubric of adaptation is akin to restricting a poet to the lexicon of climatology. The term *adaptation* connotes the organismic analogy and is a form of organizational change. It is not a synonym for organizational change.

Therefore, after conducting the study and revisiting the literature, the researcher has rejected the Cameron (1984) perspective of conceptualizing interpretive strategy within the domain of adaptation. Adaptation implies that the environment is "concrete, objective, independent, given, imminent, and out there," state Smircich and Stubbart (1985). Therefore, the adaptive strategist "faces an intellectual challenge to delineate a strategy that will meet the *real* demands and real constraints that exist 'out there'" (p. 726). Thus, the goal of the manager is to find the optimum fit between the organization and its environment.

This notion of adaptation was awkward and cumbersome to use in data analysis, as it entailed conceptualizing the organization as a whole or components of a whole. Consequently, it was difficult to rationalize the individual actions of leaders and followers as they negotiate their individual positions, which Chaffee (1984) refers to as "disjointed incrementalism" (p. 220). Culture, symbols, and interpretation, factors which are absent in "pure" adaptation theory, were viewed as critical elements in explaining and understanding the Story of Olds College. As noted earlier, Keeley (1980) addresses the inadequacy of the organismic analogy in its simplistic measure of organizational success being the attainment of a few goals rather than the social contract analogy where organizational success is "the satisfaction of all participants" (p. 359).

On the other hand, the Three Models of Strategy concept posited by Chaffee (1985b) were more useful in interpreting the data, as this perspective differentiated adaptive and interpretive processes. As mentioned earlier, the Three Models of Strategy framework (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988) is particularly helpful in explaining an organization's internal force of culture and could easily be applied to the Story of Olds. The researcher found the interpretive strategy which incorporated the ideology of the social contract to be a much more comprehensive and accurate way of describing major changes at Olds College. Chaffee's (1984) conclusion that interpretive strategy which directs adaptive strategy is more effective in college turnaround management was verified in the study of Olds College.

Ford and Baucus (1987) declare that "decision makers cannot design interpretation-free organizations." They stress that "organizations' strategies, strategic capabilities, structures, and cultures inform (but do not determine) the interpretations of organizational members at all levels" (p. 376). Daft and Weick (1984) view interpretation as the process through which "information is given meaning and actions are chosen" (p. 294). The task of management, they and others say, is to interpret and translate cues into meaning for the organization (Daft & Weick, 1983, 1984; Ford & Baucus, 1987; Gray, 1988; Smircich & Morgan, 1982; Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). Smircich and Morgan are unequivocal in their assertion that, fundamentally, leadership is a process of "power-based reality construction and needs to be understood in these terms" (p. 270). All organizations depend on the existence of shared meanings and interpretations of reality. "An essential factor in leadership is the capacity to influence and organize meaning for the members of the organization" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 39).

Therefore, the management of meaning is pivotal to leadership. Chaffee (1984) concludes her study with the observation that "sincerity, diligence, and even sophisticated analysis of demand cannot overcome the absence of a shared perception of what the college is about and why it matters, or a shared conviction of making good its promises" (p. 233).

However, Mangham (1988) carries this concept a step further as he discounts the notion that organizations are "cognitively bonded" (p. 51). He argues that usually social actors "simply perform. . . . [They] do not reflect, plan, select alternatives, act and then evaluate their actions" (p. 51). It is emotions which form the "glue" of organizational behavior. The researcher concurs with Mangham that "individuals, groups, organizations, institutions are emotionally rather than cognitively bonded" (p. 50). Interpretive strategies, therefore, are more conducive to understanding organizational dynamics than linear or adaptive strategies, since implicit in the interpretive approach is the "social construction of reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In reference to constructing a reality generally, and one's perception of the environment specifically, Von Foerster (1981) believes that everyone has to discover for themselves the following postulate: "The environment as we perceive it is our invention" (p. 288).

The researcher agrees with Gray (1988), who believes "organization experience is always subjective" (p. 150). Mangham (1988) argues that most people perform without reflection and re-create familiar patterns and, further, that most managers' behavior is not consciously strategic. "Contrary to the explicit model of cognitive theorists and management consultants, we rarely make conscious decisions that determine our actions. . . . We simply behave" (pp. 32-33). Gray uses a boat metaphor to explain this concept:

> Sailing a boat may be a suitable analogy because sailing is a response to wind, tide and the characteristics of the boat, the captain having to be aware of what is at that moment going on every bit as much as being aware of where he wants to go. And when conditions change, he changes his objectives, he does not abandon the boat and walk. (p. 154)

The subjective approach posits that it is likely many versions of organizational reality co-exist as members of an organization make sense of their actions. The recognition of multiple realities can produce a state of uncertainty and ambiguity for the practitioner and researcher, which this investigator found to be a necessary condition for understanding organizational dynamics. Effective interpretive leaders, or researchers, for that matter, do not know with certitude whether or not their perceptions, interpretations, or actions are "correct" but accept the ambiguity of uncertainty.

In order for a major transformation to occur in an organization, people have to change the way they view themselves. At Olds College the leaders tried to make sense of their organization's environment and culture and helped college staff to accept new constructed meanings in order to create a shared vision. In this study the research recognized that change required college staff to break with past, "certain" practices and accept the initially uncomfortable feelings of ambiguity in trying something different. Support, encouragement to risk failure, and involvement in decisions which affected them were important factors in creating the climate so that people could begin to create new meanings and thereby change their organization.

Implications for Further Research, Theory, and Practice

The chapter concludes with a discussion of implications which is presented under the three following headings: "Implications for Further Research," "Implications for Theory," and "Implications for Practice."

Implications for further research.

A small Alberta college with an agricultural mandate was the site of this historical case study. The findings largely corroborated those of Chaffee (1984) in her study of private liberal arts colleges in the United States. An investigation of adaptive and interpretive strategies in other post-secondary Canadian college settings could extend understandings of leadership. Public comprehensive community colleges or private, degree-granting universities could provide interesting sites for investigation.

The interpretive approach, within the naturalistic paradigm, was effective in studying the research questions. The identification of the critical incidents as perceived by informants was a useful method of obtaining clues for investigating organizational change. The critical events were linked chronologically and provided an interesting framework for data analysis.

In addition, the historical case study method was especially suited to the purposes of this research. Its flexibility allowed for an investigation of a particular organization over time, and it also enabled the researcher to acquire and present a dynamic perspective of Olds College which included the participants' interpretation of their organization's culture. The fine-grained approach which was employed in this study was of particular value in understanding organizational change from the individual perspective, which is largely ignored in the coarse-grained, macro-organizational approach which is most prevalent in the literature. Most of the organizational strategy literature has been of an adaptive nature and, further, has been confined mostly to business settings. Rather than conceptualizing organizations as large rational entities, the interpretive approach emphasizes individuals' perceptions, meanings, and impressions. The application of this form of historical case study methodology, which emphasizes the individual level of analysis, to other post-secondary settings has great potential for further research.

The participants in this study were restricted to college members; therefore, had more time and resources been available, input from the multiple constituencies of the town, alumni, business community, the

Department of Advanced Education, and industrial review participants would have contributed to a more comprehensive study. A team approach would be useful for cross-referencing and could also have added to the scope of the study. Another variation on the methodology (time permitting) would be to conduct a longitudinal study which could investigate future developments under a different administration.

The original intent of this study did not include an investigation of organizational culture. Organizational culture emerged as an important factor in leadership strategy and is a rich area for future research. Very little research has been conducted to date in the area of culture in Canadian colleges. A few suggested areas, among many, which could be investigated are the role of symbols in leadership; the effect of myths, rituals, and sagas on the organization; the relationship between the culture within and outside the organization; a comparison of the instrumental and symbolic leaders; and the social integration of personnel into the college's culture. Values are changing, and people are looking beyond financial gain and increased status as motivators; therefore, how individuals develop meaning becomes an important subject for further research.

Implications for theory. The findings of this study corroborated those found by Chaffee (1984) in the research into turnaround management of 14 liberal arts colleges in the United States. Chaffee's conclusions were comparative since she studied two sets of colleges in contrast to this study, which was restricted to one college. The conclusions which are corroborated are as follows: An interpretive strategy which directs adaptive strategy contributed to leadership effectiveness, a clearly articulated mandate was pivotal in interpretive strategy, the awareness and use of symbols increased leadership effectiveness, and successful turnaround strategy was unique to the college. Further research into turnaround management involving different types of post-secondary institutions and various research designs and methodological forms could contribute to theory development in this area of study.

Most of the strategy literature in higher education, as mentioned earlier, investigates the effective adaptation of organizations to their respective environments. Environments are perceived as being intractable, objective phenomena which are "out there." According to the proponents of the adaptive strategy perspective, the successful institutions are those which maximize resources, increase enrollments, and expand facilities. However, this research, in contrast, emphasizes the social constructionist view. Therefore, rather than focusing upon the management of resources, this study stresses the importance of the management of ideologies. Both approaches are vital, but, as shown in this research report, the interpretive approach serves as a framework which has an organizing function for other strategic approaches. Very little research has been conducted in the interpretive area, particularly in Canadian higher education, a sector which provides rich potential for future investigation.

The combination of Boulding's (1956) General Systems Theory and Chaffee's (1985b) Three Models of Strategy were useful in interpreting the data and in distinguishing between leadership strategies. These theoretical approaches are particularly powerful in data analysis when used in conjunction with Chaffee and Tierney's (1988) conceptual framework of Dynamic Equilibrium in Organizational Culture. The foregoing assisted the researcher in understanding the dynamics of organizational culture and adaptation and recommends their application to future research in the field of organizational change in higher education.

Interpretive approaches to conceptualizing about organizations are of a different order than adaptive approaches. In the literature interpretive strategy is occasionally subsumed under the rubric of adaptation, which may be confusing and appear contrived. This inconsistency needs to be considered in the development of future theoretical approaches used to describe and to understand organizations.

Implications for practice. This case study has generated insights for the researcher which may have general implications for practicing senior educational administrators. These insights are based on the researcher's interpretations of informants' interpretations of activity in one site; therefore, readers should be cautioned accordingly in assessing the value of these implications. In reference to the relationship between theory and practice, March (1984) observes that while informed opinion says the earth is round, one experiences it as flat. Typically, people "talk about a round world and use a flat map" (p. 33). He points out that practitioners should pursue the precepts of the theory which improves organizations and administration, recognizing that it is not necessary to fulfill them. He concludes that "sometimes our theories are misleading, and the way we talk confuses the way we act" (p. 35). In this spirit the researcher offers the following implications for practice.

Much of the literature on leadership and organizations has focussed upon instrumental and behavioral aspects, yet relatively little attention has been given to the symbolic and cultural dimensions of organizations

(Sergiovanni, 1984). This study has indicated that the most effective leadership strategies were those that took into account cultural as well as environmental variables. A further implication for practitioners is that interpretive strategies which involved the management of meaning and symbols were critical in providing a framework for and maximizing the effect of other strategies. Administrators, then, need to be equally attentive to internal, cultural forces and external, environmental pressures.

Another implication of this study for educational leaders is the importance of an organizational mission and mandate which incorporate the organization's unique culture. The "right" mandate encompasses the purpose of organizing and the value and meaning for the commitment of organizational members, although it should be noted that each person has unique perceptions of and different reasons for participating in the organization. In addition to providing a focus for participants' energy and activity, commitment to a clearly articulated mandate can also help leaders in acquiring resources, as it provides substance and direction which can have an appeal to funding agencies.

The research indicated that staff members found consultation and involvement in decision making meaningful. The implications for practice are that commitment of personnel occurs through participation. In addition, increased communication is useful for informed decision making and problem solving. Through organizational learning and empowerment of staff by leaders, decisions can be made at lower levels in the organization. However, a further inference of this study is that administrators should be aware that staff involvement and organizational change require an expenditure of human energy and resources which needs to be balanced with time for reflection, the establishment of priorities, and a period of consolidation.

As noted earlier, consultation and involvement of staff are critical in developing a common understanding and a shared meaning of the organization. However, the value of staff training and retraining cannot be overemphasized. Educational administrators interested in exercising effective leadership must give at least as much attention to the maintenance and renewal of their human resources as to the repair and replacement of their physical resources and the management of their fiscal affairs. While instruction represents the core technology of educational organizations, in order to maintain quality and, further, to strive for excellence, educational leaders must give priority to the evaluation, support, and development of not only the instructional staff, but the support and the administrative staff as well.

Therefore, administrators contemplating organizational change should be aware of the implications of this study--that an organization changes as a result of changes in values, attitudes, and behaviors of staff. Further, leaders need to create an open climate of trust and support as a precondition to changing the people of the organization.

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Appendix 1

Gaining Entry

October 5, 1988

Dr. D. Cornish, President
Olds College
OLDS, Alberta

Dear Dr. Cornish:

The purpose of this letter is to formally request authorization to conduct doctoral research at Olds College over the next few months. The subject of research is organizational adaptation, i.e., how a college adapts to changes in its external environment.

For your information, I have enclosed a brief overview and statement of purpose and significance of the study. The case study approach, which I will be using, involves interviewing, document analysis, and observation, the primary data source being the interview. Therefore, I will be seeking the cooperation of various individuals in the college and community.

The proposed research will follow the University of Alberta, Department of Educational Administration's Research Ethics Review Policies and Procedures (1988). Further, all participants will be informed that their involvement is voluntary, they can withdraw at any time, and their anonymity will be guaranteed. Where anonymity cannot be guaranteed, the researcher will obtain consent from the participants prior to including their views in the study.

I have enclosed a resume and a personal profile snippet from our internal newsletter which you may distribute at your discretion. The resume is a little outdated since I have not added my first year of doctoral studies nor that I have left Grande Prairie College.

Olds College was my first choice for a research site, as I believe it will provide an ideal setting for the intended research. I hope my request meets favorably with the Olds community.

Sincerely,

D. E. Hall

DEH/lp
Encls.

Appendix 2

Preliminary Interview Guide

Preliminary Interview Guide

Department Head - Plant Sciences

Following a grand tour and a brief explanation of the study and concept of adaptation:

1. How long have you been the department head of Plant Sciences?

   Probe: Association - other positions at the college.

2. Over your time at Olds, what aspects of the college do you consider to be important?

   Probe: Could you tell me more? Examples?

3. What changes have you witnessed at the college?

   Probe: Can you think of others?

4. In what ways has the college changed for the better?

   Probe: Relate to the Plant Sciences Department.

5. In what ways has the college changed for the worse?

   Probe: Relate to the Plant Sciences Department.

6. What does Olds College mean to you--its values, etc.?

7. Would you describe what incidents/events were critical in changing the college?

   Probe: How did they affect the Plant Sciences Department?

8. Which of the changes you mentioned have been a result of conditions external to the college?

   Probe: Could you elaborate?

9. How do you think the community views the college? Do you think these views have changed over the years?

   Probe: Municipal community, agricultural comunity.

10. Are there things that came to mind while I was asking you questions that you haven't mentioned?

Probe: Is there anything you would like to add?

11. What do people at the college value? (added subsequently)

12. Can you suggest other people from whom I could obtain additional information, possibly a contrary perspective?

Appendix 3

Letter of Thanks and Data Verification

University of Alberta
Edmonton

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education

Canada T6G 2G5

7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 432-5241

Dear

Please find enclosed a transcript of our interview. Would you please read it over to make sure it accurately reflects what you intended to say. Word-for-word accuracy is not as important as the idea which is being expressed. If there are corrections, additions, or modifications I'd appreciate it if you'd make note of them. I'll be in touch with you on my next trip to Olds in the beginning of February.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Appendix 4

Excerpt from Fieldnotes: The Alcohol Issue

Excerpt from Fieldnotes

The Alcohol Issue Feb. 9/89

The purpose of the student general assembly was to inform students of election of OCSA officers, to listen to Dr. R. Levinson talk about teacher evaluations, and a general info update. The bleachers were full of students, a couple of administrators, a few Student Personnel people. As an inducement, a bag of goodies was to be raffled off in a draw of tickets which were handed out as students entered. Dan had asked for a few moments of time to address the students on an issue which had been growing at Olds.

The Student President welcomed Dan and the students and passed the mike over. Dan put down his styrofoam cup of coffee and strolled to the mike. He is an impressive figure, tall, a little overweight, with a fringe of brown (grey starting) hair and a bushy, swashbuckling moustache (bordering on handlebar). Grey suit, light blue shirt, and matching striped tie. A toothpick jauntily hanging out of his mouth, he began, "Can you hear me without this thing? Okay, I'd like to talk to you today about an issue that has been bothering me." People who arrived late were clustered by the door, and the arrival of latecomers made hearing difficult. "Okay, you can't hear. I'll put this back on because I've got something to say I want all of you to hear, although I suspect that you're not the ones who are the ones who need to hear this.

"I'm speaking to you as your president, not as a friend (or whatever). [O.C.: Implies he speaks to them at other times as friend.] Events of the last week have brought me to a point where I must talk to you about the problem of alcohol on campus. I've had it!

"Let me tell you, I'm 47, and I'm trying for the last couple of months to lose fat so I don't get a heart attack, and I walk around and run about town, so I see you anytime between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. And I know what people mean when I get complaints about Olds College students rushing down Fiftieth on Thursday nights on the way to the bar. People are afraid for their lives.

"I was in Edmonton and Calgary and got caught in the storm. When I got back on Thursday I was met by a number of things. The college was closed on Tuesday, and some yahoos were pressuring the administration to open the OC Corral so they could get boozed. Later in the day one yahoo got tanked up and proceeded to do $800 damage before he left here. He smashed a big window. A half-ton flipped later that week end over end on Highway 2. Half-tons are flying around with people going to and from the bar. I live on campus, and I'm concerned about my daughter's life and the lives of the other two children who live on campus, too. I don't have to remind you of another tragic incident in [picks up sheet of paper on table] the memorial service tonight for [an Olds College student who committed suicide]. I'm not saying his death was caused by alcohol, but it was related.

"I'm no prude; I have a drink and fun every so often, too, but responsibly--on the weekend. I've had it with the alcohol abuse--this drug abuse which is worse than marijuana. It's a general problem, not just an Olds College problem. I was reading in the paper two nights ago about a report of the operations down at a major [medical] center--120 out of 300 (approx.) of the causes behind the operations were alcohol related.

"On the way over here there were beer bottles; we see them all over the campus. In front of the residence there were empty bottles and broken bottles. I've had it!

"This Thursday-night drunk has got to stop, and I'm asking you to help me. I'm not threatening you because I need your help. I'm going to ask CROCK (alcohol awareness group) to help address this problem. We care about you and value education. Caring and education are our value. And my job is to communicate and convey these values. This alcohol abuse is not part of our values.

"I'm going to ask faculty not to let up on Friday mornings in consideration of the Thursday parties and Friday morning hangovers. Losing Friday means that 20% of the week and your education suffers--and the education of your classmates. I can hear some of you clapping in your heads now. This Thursday-night-drunk business is going to stop with this community's help.

"We cherish you. This has been a rather 'sober' address, but it is important. I'll pass the microphone to Mike now. Thank you." - Medium applause.

[O.C.: The address was compelling, given from the heart, without notes. From Dan Cornish the president. Straight, no nonsense, delivered without recrimination, talking down, or admonishments. In full recognition that the students who were there were not necessarily the abusers. But the message was out, and the community was aware. An example of a value being communicated--to the community. He was on his way to a faculty meeting where the issue was going to be addressed again (by him).

Very forthright--"I care about you, cherish you. Concern about our reputation and the college. You are losing your education."

Overall very effective and truly sobering. What follow-up occurs will tell the tale.]

As I left, the Student Activities Co-ordinator mentioned, "We're going to shut down the Thursday pub. This will really have an effect on student activities." (This was said without remorse or bitterness but as a real challenge to student activities programming.)

P.S.: Somewhere in the speech he referred to the community at large and the resources which had come to the college. "Each of us has a reputation, and the college has one, too. All our reputations are at stake."

Another reference to a T.V. series which is running currently about the "shoot-'em-up" wild west. "This isn't the wild west anymore, where you can go around shooting everybody."

Appendix 5

Mission Statement

OLDS COLLEGE'S DISTINCTIVE EXCELLENCE

No two people are alike, nor are any two organizations the same. Olds College will not become excellent by mimicking other successful colleges. The Council realized that it is important for Olds College to recognize the differentiating, particular strengths characteristic of our College. In response to present challenges, we must consciously state what Olds College does extremely well as a consequence of its particular skills and knowledge.

Olds College strives to prepare people for success in the world of direct agricultural production and technical support, agri-business support and agricultural products processing, in a learning environment which recognizes the importance of:

- **a caring, yet demanding instructor/student relationship;**
- **practical, problem-solving application of knowledge in the "hands-on" tradition; and**
- **demonstration of productively sized enterprises, and use of operating enterprises as laboratories.**
- **the student's subsequent integration into an ever-changing environment.**

This focus is the basis for the distinctive excellence of Olds College. In a more detailed way, Olds College strives to achieve the following ideal conditions:

- Olds College believes in the primacy of a learning environment where students, teachers, staff and governors are ALL learners. The learning enterprise is a partnership in which all participants are lifelong learners.
- Olds College strives to develop a high quality learning environment characterized by regular and meaningful input from a wide range of appropriate communities.
- While Olds College focuses its training initiatives on wide aspects of the agricultural sector, it strives to educate students through an integration of counselling information, the provision of career skills, information management skills, and life and learning skills.
- Olds College will strive, through involvement with demonstration and field testing, to infuse its learning environment with the application of agricultural technology from broad, yet appropriate, sources.

- Olds College strongly recognizes through its Board-governed status, the need to maintain high levels of independence and responsibility in the choices which shape its future. Yet the College does not exist in a world of its own and must work to establish cooperative relationships with all participants in agricultural education.

- Due to rapid change in both agricultural and educational technologies, Olds College strives to be flexible and responsive to a wide range of learners' needs.

- In the midst of change, Olds College strives to create an organized and systematic commitment to the retraining and nurturing of the College's people as an essential condition for a healthy learning environment.

- Olds College believes in orderly, planned and controlled development that emphasizes fiscal responsibility to the public.

- Olds College is convinced of the long term value of a consultative, democratic and participative environment in the making and implementing of policy. Shared information is strength in an organization.

- Olds College recognizes the influence of both international and national markets on successful agricultural endeavors and believes in creating an environment where staff and students are made familiar with these markets.

- Agriculture's continuing success will require the efficient management of labor, capital, technology and information. The key to success, then, is access to information and the development of skills in managing information designed to produce excellent decisions.

- The College believes it should take an active role in the surrounding community, and strives to cooperate as a good corporate citizen with its immediate community. In addition, the College acknowledges it plays a leadership role in the broader agricultural community, in western Canada, Canada and around the world.

- Olds College recognizes that it is a publicly funded institution and as such has a responsibility to deliver public service to appropriate communities. However, the primary function of the College is educational and public service must always occur as a complement to and not a sacrifice in the quality of any programs or services.

- To encourage Olds College employees to contribute to the economic and social development of the community.

Appendix 6

Issue and Problem List

College Organization Paper

Issue and Problem List

From September 26, 1988 Meeting

1. Quality of instruction
2. Marketing and advertising. xxxx
3. Trust (Academics for Vice-President)
4. Communications (at Program level and others). xxxx
5. Inconsistencies at Department Head level. x
6. Quality of Programs. xxx
7. Core courses (curriculum) - includes Basic Education. xx
8. Interdisciplinary industry needs
9. Problems at Department Head Level
10. Standardization--inequality in courses from course section to course section. x
11. Perceptual misunderstanding of Olds College courses, programs and graduates
12. Lack of a cooperative global effort. People haven't bought into the vision. xx
13. Needs assessment vs. instruction as it goes on. i.e., How do you find out, or do needs assessment while the instructional process carries on. x
14. Future needs plan from various areas to service departments (i.e., academic/support)
15. Set up structure to facilitate change for the future. x
16. Professional development - technological changes (not on the leading edge of industry advancement)
17. Need to develop a client-oriented model. xx
18. Interdepartmental breakdown in communication
19. Administrative workload - climate to keep good people - don't overwork people already in place

20. Vision of the college - 5 yr. plan

21. University transfer - associate degree. xx

22. Differentiation of responsibility at different levels.
Coordinators/Dept. Head/Dean

23. Cutting edge technology into the program content (Classroom)

24. Credibility of individual programs (F.M.P.) - inside the institution and outside

25. Workload issue and recognition for those who go above and beyond the call of duty

26. Need lots of equipment - how to keep up

27. Lack of prioritization of tasks within the college

28. Need to develop the ability to change and be flexible as an institution and each area within the institution

29. Communicate industry needs to students

30. Deans and Dept. Heads need to alter or aid their role by hiring a policy writer

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME:	Donald Ernest Hall
HOME ADDRESS:	10022 - 86 Avenue Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 0A6 Phone: (403) 539-0981
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS:	107 Pembina Hall University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H8 Phone: (403) 431-0918
PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH:	Montreal, Quebec March 13, 1942
CITIZENSHIP:	Canadian
LANGUAGES SPOKEN:	English and French
MARITAL STATUS:	Married (to Amy Jerri Hall) Two Children Derek Arthur (b. 1968) Patrick Ernest (b. 1970)
PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS:	• administration of post-secondary education • development of learning climates • development and maintenance of organization – environment linkages • administration of human resources

FORMAL EDUCATION:

1987 – 1989	Doctoral Candidate, Educational Administration, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta
1976 – 1980	Advanced Graduate Study, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont
1966 – 1967	Master of Education, Springfield College, Springfield, Massachusetts
1962 – 1966	Bachelor of Arts (Major, Psychology), Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec
1960 – 1962	Class II/ClassI Teaching Diploma, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

1981 – 1988: Dean of Student Services,
Grande Prairie Regional College, Grande Prairie, Alberta

Responsibilities:

- Administrator of the Registrariat, Library and A/V, Counselling, Residence, Student Activities, Student Centre, High School Liaison, Awards and Financial Aid, Food Services, Internal Communications and Health Services departments.
- Development of campus and student life — Chairman, Campus Committee.
- Member of the Administrative Co-ordinating Committee overseeing the general administration of the College, reporting directly to the President.

Special Assignments:

- Member of the Board of Governors — Faculty Contract Negotiating Committee for 5 successive years.
- Implemented the POISE Student Information System — on-line registration and academic history package.
- Developed policies and administered the operation of the new student residence.
- Established policy and direct operation of the new Student Activity Building.
- Instituted the UTLAS system, an automated cataloguing system for the library and a totally integrated system (CLSI).
- Introduced Health Services and a comprehensive Student Activity Program.
- Member of the College Personnel Committee which developed a classification and remuneration system for support staff.
- Initiated an Academic Advising program.
- Responsible for the adoption of Student Judicial Procedures and the Student Bill of Rights.
- Developed and co-facilitated a new faculty orientation program.
- Taught Psychology 260.
- Under the aegis of B.C. Colleges and Institute Trustees, participated in the external evaluation of Douglas College, New Westminster, B.C., in Fall 1986.

1977 – 1981: College Dean of Students and Campus Principal,
Viger Campus, Dawson College, Montreal, Quebec

Responsibilities as Dean of Students:

- Full responsibility for all aspects of student life for 7000 students located on four downtown campuses.
- Administered a budget of $1 million and a professional staff of 55 including the following departments: Health Services, Student Affairs, Counselling, Information, Black and Third World, Student Placement and Financial Aid, Athletics and Learning Centre; college transportation system, food service operations, and community liaison.
- Shared in the general administration of the College as a member of the Senior Management Team reporting to the Director-General.
- Member of the College Board of Governors.
- Participant in teacher improvement program.

- Liaison with local educational communities, provincial Directors of Student Services, and the Department of Education.
- Fostered the principles of student development and service education through co-curricular programs, student government, judicial processes, student co-management, clubs and services.

Special Assignment:

- Organized National Student Leadership Institute, May 1979 and 1980.

Responsibilities of Campus Principal:

- Campus life and working conditions of 1,500 staff, students and faculty.
- Directed campus Student Service team and as Chairman of Viger Campus Management Group, coordinated the efforts of the faculty, Plant and Facilities (security, maintenance), Educational Resources (Library, A/V), printing, bookstore and switchboard.
- Facilitated and maintained optimum conditions for a campus learning community and a student-centred environment.

1975 – 1977: Director of Personnel,
Dawson College, Montreal, Quebec

Responsibilities:

- Administered the department responsible for human resource management of 600 staff, faculty and professionals.
- Contract administration, staffing, classification, fringe benefits, labour arbitration and grievance procedures.
- Initiated a management training program.
- Responsible for the computer conversion of personnel systems.
- Member of planning committee (ACCC) of national symposium on collective bargaining at the college level.
- General college administration as part of the senior management group reporting to the Director-General.

1974 – 1975: Campus Director & Associate Director of College Student Services – Selby Campus & Chairman, Campus Management Group
Dawson College, Montreal, Quebec

1971 – 1974: Elementary School Principal,
Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM), Montreal, Quebec

1962 – 1971: Head of Comprehensive High School Guidance Department; Counsellor; and College, High School and Elementary School Teacher (Grades 6-11) Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (PSBGM) – Sir George Williams University, Montreal, Quebec.

PAST MEMBERSHIPS:

Alberta Association for Continuing Education
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
American Association for Counselling & Development
Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)
Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO)
Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) – past Western Representative
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
National Council on Student Development – past Western Representative
Northwest Adult Education Association
Rotary Club of Grande Prairie
Senior Continuing Education Officers, Province of Alberta
Senior Student Services Officers, Province of Alberta

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:

Phi Delta Kappa (18 years): Past President, Montreal Chapter: Kappan of the Year – 1979/80

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Director and Program Chairman — Grande Prairie Rotary Club
President, Grande Prairie Western Shows (Rodeo/Stampede)
Past President, Grande Prairie Centaurs Rugby Club
Chairman, Local Advisory Council
Canadian Employment and Immigration Centre, Grande Prairie

PERSONAL INTERESTS:

Squash, skiing, fishing, rugby, backpacking, cooking, reading, music appreciation

SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS/PRESENTATIONS:

Developed and led the following activities:

March 1989	University of Alberta, Housing Division, *Service Awareness and Team Building*
January 1989	Alberta Senior Student Services Officers and ACTISEC Executive, *Workshop Design*
March 1988	University of Alberta, Lister Hall Students' Association, Coordinators' Colloquium
September 1988	Olds College, Student Orientation, *Orientation Convocation*
August 1988	University of Alberta, *First Annual Lister Hall Staff Training Institute*

Fall 1987	University of Alberta, Housing and Food Service Administration – *Management Training Workshop*
March 1987	Alberta College Boards of Governors Workshop '87 – co-organized *The Board and its Community* – 3 day program
Fall 1981 - 1988	Grande Prairie Regional College – *Annual New Faculty Orientation*
December 1986	Division of Student Services, Fairview College – *Team Building*
June 1986	CACUSS National Conference –*Student Service Model – Flush, Dilute or Watershed*
May 1986	ACC National Conference – *Trends in Community Colleges and Their Impact on Student Services*
April 1986	Alberta Colleges and Technical Institutes, Student Executive Council (ACTISEC) – *Think Globally – Act Locally*
October 1985	Lethbridge Community College – New Faculty – *Student Personnel Services in Alberta*
May 1985	CACUSS Western Regional Conference – *The Student of the '80s*
Winter 1984	Phi Delta Kappa – Grande Prairie Chapter – *Response to Retrenchment*
Fall 1983	Grande Prairie Regional College Board of Governors – *The College Student in Alberta*
Fall 1983	Phi Delta Kappa – Grande Prairie Chapter –*The College Student of the 80s*
Fall 1983	University of Alberta, three-day seminar – *Managing in Times of Restraint*